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The Religion of Baudelaire

BY MARTIN TURNELL

THE *Fleurs du Mal* was published on June 25, 1857 and at once began to enjoy a *succès de scandale*. The *Figaro* launched two violent attacks on it in the first week of July, which did much to attract the attention of the authorities. On July 11, the sheets remaining at the printers were confiscated by the police and criminal proceedings were instituted against the poet and his publishers. The case was heard on August 20 in the Sixième Cour Correctionnelle, and Baudelaire was found guilty of publishing a work which was an offense against public morality. The Court ordered the suppression of six of the poems and fined the poet 300 francs and his publishers 100 francs each. Baudelaire's fine was later reduced to 50 francs—possibly owing to the intervention of the Empress Eugénie—and in 1949, by a peculiarity of French law, the conviction was annulled.

In spite of his boasted contempt for authority, Baudelaire took his conviction to heart. He set to work, with very bad grace, to revise the book and to write some new poems in place of the six that had been condemned. "These cursed *Fleurs du Mal* that I've got to start all over again," he said in a letter written to his mother in February 1858. "One needs rest for a thing like that. To think that I've got to become a poet again, artificially by an act of the will . . . and deal afresh with a subject I thought I'd exhausted just to obey three magistrates, one of whom is *Nacquart*." The second edition, which contained not six but thirty-two fresh poems, appeared in January, 1861. Baudelaire sent a copy printed on fine paper to the Abbé Cardinne, his mother's confessor at Honfleur, who had been clamouring for one during the past three years. Baudelaire was horrified to learn that the worthy ecclesiastic had burnt the precious book. In a letter to his mother of April 1, 1861, the poet describes the priest's conduct as "monstrous and inexplicable." "People don't burn books any more," he said, "except madmen for the fun of seeing the blaze." He added these significant words: "He did not even understand that the book was based on a Catholic idea." Thus, the long controversy began.

It is unfortunate that in France, where differences between the parties go deeper than in most other civilized countries, the poet's religion should have given rise to sectarian squabbles. Unbelievers have rubbed their hands in glee over the fact that Baudelaire's last recorded utterance, when he was partially paralysed and scarcely articulate, was blasphemous; and they have alleged that his mother took the opportunity of sending for a priest to administer the last sacraments when he had fallen into a coma and was unable to protest, as they are sure he would have done. Catholic writers cannot be exonerated of the

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charge of juggling with the texts in attempts to prove that Baudelaire was a "Catholic poet," and we must agree with the Abbé Jean Massin who declares in his very sympathetic study, *Baudelaire entre Dieu et Satan*, that he is appalled by "certain recent canonizations of St. Charles Baudelaire or certain pretensions to treat him as a Doctor of the Church."

The literary critic is not primarily concerned with Baudelaire's beliefs as a man or in deciding whether, as Mr. Eliot suggests, he needs our prayers. He is concerned with the function of religion in his work. The proper place to start is therefore with the poems themselves. Baudelaire attached great importance to the order in which they were printed. "The only praise that I ask for the book," he said in a letter to Alfred de Vigny which accompanied a presentation copy of the second edition of the *Fleurs du Mal*, "is the recognition that it is not a mere collection of verse, but that it has a beginning and an end. All the new poems are designed to fit into the singular framework that I had chosen."

THE second edition, which is regarded by most scholars as the canon, consists of an introductory poem called *Au Lecteur* and 126 other poems divided into the six sections or chapters: *Spleen et Idéal* (I), *Tableaux Parisiens* (II), *Le Vin* (III), *Fleurs du Mal* (IV), *Révolte* (V), and *La Mort* (VI). Barbey d'Aurévilly remarked that the poems lose greatly unless they are read in the order in which the poet arranged them. The book is, indeed, the autobiography of a soul, an account of a circular tour of the modern world which is divided into six stages.

In the introductory poem Baudelaire starts from the assumption that sin is the primary fact about the human condition and is the source of all man's ills and vices, particularly of *ennui* which is the spiritual malady that dominates his world. The first and longest chapter describes a state of tension between a reaching out to a superior reality and the downward tug of *spleen* which is used in virtually the same sense as *ennui*. The poems in this chapter divide into three main groups: the Cycle of Art, the Cycles of Love, and the Cycle of Spleen. The first two tell of the poet's attempts to overcome *spleen* and to resolve the tension by artistic creation or human love; the third records his victory of *spleen*.

There are four love cycles. The first two, which are addressed to Jeanne Duval and Madame Sabatier respectively, stand for sensual and "spiritual" love. They are in a sense the transposition of *spleen* and *idéal* into sexual terms. In the poems to Jeanne Duval he is continually sinking down into one of those interior "gulfs" which recur in his poetry. Madame Sabatier, on the other hand, is described as "the guardian Angel, the Muse and the Madonna" who has the task of saving him from "every serious sin" and conducting his "steps

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in the path of Beauty." The third cycle is addressed to the actress, Marie Daubrun, who is part mistress and part sister-figure, sometimes a symbol of "sacred," but more often of "profane" love. The fourth cycle, known as "the cycle of the secondary heroines" marks a movement away from the pure love of youth and the dissipation of the poet's best impulses in a series of "affairs" with different women.

In the Cycle of Spleen we see the poet burrowing more and more deeply into himself until he is a prisoner of his own mood and completely cut off from the rest of the world. In one of the last poems of the cycle he says of himself: "I am the wound and the knife . . . the executioner and the victim."

The "Tableaux Parisiens" are an effort to re-establish contact with the world of common experience and take the form of a twenty-four hour "tour" of Paris; but in the midst of its crowded thoroughfares he remains isolated and alone. The third chapter is an account of another unsuccessful attempt to overcome *spleen* by escaping into the "artificial paradise" of intoxication by wine. It provides only a momentary illusion of escape, and the fourth chapter records the dizzy downward plunge into the world of pure "evil." It originally consisted of twelve poems dealing with the main varieties of sexual perversion. It is more carefully constructed than some of the other chapters and when the civil authorities suppressed three of the poems, Baudelaire made no attempt to replace them, but included them in the second edition in mutilated form. "Révolte" consists of three unsatisfactory and probably early poems expressing the writer's revolt against the situation in which he found himself. The book ends on a note of agnosticism with the poet waiting for death as the only solution of his predicament. The last poem in the book, called *Le Voyage*, is a backward glance and a summing-up. It describes a little band of explorers setting out on a voyage round the world in the hope of stilling their spiritual unrest; but finding everywhere the same things which had shocked them at home, and especially "the wearisome spectacle of immortal sin," the poet takes leave of them and of us with his conclusion:

Plonger au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou Ciel, qu'importe?

Au fond de l'Inconnu pour trouver du nouveau!

THE *Fleurs du Mal* is filled with Christian symbolism, and with images and words drawn from the Christian religion. The devil stalks through its pages. We are continually reading of "angels," "evil," "sin," "repentance," "vices" and "ecstasy." Yet, one must admit with the Abbé Massin that Baudelaire's Christianity is "a very odd form of Christianity and that it is impossible to give it the most indulgent of *Nil obstat*." For though he often uses theological terms in their orthodox sense, he gives them just as often a personal *nuance*. The devil is sometimes the Christian devil, and sometimes

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the devil of the Romantics. His "angels" are usually avenging angels or angels of evil; but the word is also used to describe a mistress or the divine element in man. There is one significant omission. The term "grace" is often used to denote the elegance and beauty of woman; but in the poetry (as distinct from the prose), this word is never used in its theological sense. On the other hand, "ecstasy" is used as a sort of equivalent; but it conveys the temporary "rapture" which he expresses in the celebrated love poem, *La Chevelure*, and never the "ecstasy" of the mystics.

Turning next to the poet's pronouncements on religion in his letters and diaries, which provide a commentary on the poetry, Baudelaire wrote to his mother on May 6, 1861: "I desire with all my heart—and with a sincerity which no one except myself will ever understand—to believe that an external invisible being is interested in my fate; but what must you do to believe it?" In another letter written to Flaubert on June 26 of the previous year he had said: "After probing very deeply into the memory of my dreams, I perceived that I was obsessed by the impossibility of explaining certain actions or sudden thoughts of man without the hypothesis of the intervention of an evil power which is external to him. This is a great admission but the whole of the nineteenth century may rise up in arms without making me blush for it." There are the famous entries in the diaries: "The theory of civilization does not lie in steam or gas or table-turning, but in the diminution of the marks of original sin." "There are in every man at every hour of the day two simultaneous postulations, one towards God, the other towards Satan. The invocation to God, or spirituality, is a desire to mount in the scale; that of Satan, or animality, is the joy in going downwards."

Two sentiments are arresting in these passages. The first is the evident sincerity of the words, *I desire with all my heart*, for there can be little doubt that Baudelaire experienced the need of Christianity or that he felt that he was, unwillingly, part of a general movement away from traditional beliefs. Secondly, his religion was highly selective: emphasis on man's fallen nature is not balanced by a belief in his redemption.

GLANCE twice at a sentence in the letter to Alfred de Vigny, already quoted: "All the new poems are designed to fit into a singular framework that I had chosen." A poet living like Dante in a stable universe had no need to worry about a "framework." It was provided for him in the form of a body of commonly accepted beliefs which give his experience its unity and its pattern. Baudelaire lived in an age in which there was no longer a body of commonly accepted beliefs. He was therefore obliged to create a new "framework"—the image of the "circular tour"—in which religion, so far from imposing the pattern, appears in a fragmentary, mutilated form. It follows that

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though religion is present in his poetry, it only exists *as a myth*. It is a convenient poetic fiction. It provides an explanation of the dark forces which pervade his work. It is a symbol of the order or "ideal" towards which he was striving, but it is not a faith in which *as a poet* he believes.

"Original sin," he said in another passage in the diaries, "original sin is unity become duality." This is the key to the drama of the *Fleurs du Mal*. The whole of his poetry, as suggested, is an attempt to overcome *spleen* and to reach some sort of transcendent reality. It is also an attempt to restore or preserve the unity of man which artistically is reflected in the use of the alexandrine and his preoccupation with form. Now since "dualism," which is the root of his dilemma, was caused by original sin and since there is no place in his world for grace and redemption, it is clear that the attempt is condemned to frustration and failure from the start. It was in the nature of things impossible to restore unity or to resolve the tension which throbs all through the book and which can only have one end—the destruction of man. When we look into it, we find that Baudelaire records the dissolution of man in a secularised urban civilization:

Que bâtir sur les cœurs est une chose sotté;
Que tout craque, amour et beauté . . .

Mon esprit est pareil à la tour qui succombe
Sous les coups du béliet infatigable et lourd.

Et le riche métal de notre volonté
Est tout vaporisé par ce savant chimiste.

Mon cœur est un palais flétri par la cohue.

Vainement ma raison voulait prendre la barre;
La Tempête en jouant déroutait ses efforts,
Et mon âme dansait, dansait, vieille gabarre
Sans mâts, sur une mer monstrueuse et sans bords!

The lines are a masterly expression of the destructive forces which attack the individual. The admirable precision of the phrasing brings home to us the general paralysis that creeps over man, infecting his "heart" (the seat of the affections), rotting his "will," corroding his "mind," rendering "reason" impotent and finally reducing the whole man (this is the sense of "soul") to a state of hopelessness, drifting on a shoreless sea where he disintegrates.

The Logos, the Mythos, and Pierre Emmanuel

By Spire Pitou

THE quest for chills and nausea, the gazing into the twilights of catastrophe and heroism, and the pyrotechnical cult of the absurd and the sterile have been newly and thoroughly tried in France. Even granting that poetry and its quasi-forms may diffuse in every direction towards failure or success, it is credible that a French poet might presently feel marooned upon a peak in Darien as he silently nurtures the hope of finding additional occasions in Paris. Since Pierre Emmanuel has so vigorously resisted the temptation to rest with the conviction that the poetic effort of the last hundred years has left little to be unearthed, that only a slight residuum remains to be panned out in the cold water of the future, it would appear timely to describe his efforts towards what Poe might have meant by the poetic principle and what Emmanuel himself would term the "moment of man on the march to his end." Thus, the present essay will attempt, albeit limitedly, to convey what Emmanuel understands by language and myth after an initial consideration of some of his literary views.

IN HIS *L'Homme et le Poète* (1942), Emmanuel explains his break with the stars of the last half of the Nineteenth Century. It is perhaps needless to state that he would find no wisdom in the methods or attitudes of Leconte de Lisle and Emile Zola, that any parishioner of materialism, naturalism, or positivism would be blind in his eyes. In speaking of Père Henri de Lubac's *Le drame de l'humanisme athée*, Emmanuel has a specific opportunity to clarify his position in regard to the "inverse religion" by which Auguste Comte and his disciples would deny free will and other fundamental dignities of man:

"... in a world where an immense effort of social organization must be accomplished, where the enormous energies set in motion by the mechanical universe are controlled only at the cost of very harsh restraints, must the human being disappear as an essential agent of destiny, as a supreme flower of history? If the answer is yes, who could still account for the fundamental absurdity of systems which take their basis in thought in order to destroy all thought? If the answer is no, what do these systems hold out to us? Who would preserve the person in all his unique aspects, that is to say, in its connection with the absolute?

Even more pertinent than his rejection of positivism is his appraisal of symbolism in relation to his position as a poet since a larger implication emerges

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from among the cluster of his reasons for viewing the approach of Mallarmé as a snare, as a false light on the path to the golden fruit. Emmanuel holds that the true seizure of poetry is prevented by the unpreventable encroachment of the symbol upon the aspect of reality which the symbol itself would profess to convey by its presence in the functional scheme. The fear that reality is ineffable in its substance is not new, but the impossibility of complete achievement in art is herein more clearly seen as a step towards penetrating to a more critical concept of poetry. Traditionally, poetry may rise like a skylark, hover like a cloud, or merely lie motionless, like a coin in the earth. Emmanuel, charting the Rimboldian upheaval with Euclidian coolness, would appear to hold that there is the creator of poetry, the witness of poetry, and poetry itself, and that the critical point of poetic being is the locus of the intersection of the planes projected by this triad. The essence of Francis Thompson, for example, might be said to become apparent at the point where Thompson is intercepted in "interstellar space" or, to use the more familiar figure, where he is glimpsed at the proper turn in the "labyrinthine ways." Since Emmanuel holds this concept of poetry to be more essential and to have been adulterated by the over-cult of symbols, a paraphrase of Gertrude Stein suggests itself: a rose is not a rose is not a rose, for any attempt directed exclusively at word-performance would be pedicated to compromise. Yet, the initial rose-image maintains, and Emmanuel hopes to preclude himself from the perils of this *sui causa* cultivation of technique: whether disorderly by pre-arrangement or affectedly ordered, whatever ensues from the stylistic approach is confined to the limits of its own virtuosity and is endowed with no significance beyond its own timely accomplishment. Nor is the key to be found in the mumbo-jumboism of Dada or in the sorcery of surrealism, two techniques which Emmanuel condemns as easy temptations to treating the ineffable as a mean or meaningless commodity. Viewing the "becoming" of humans and the collective persistence of humanity, he objects that "this linear continuity, this obscure evolvment of an image, to which generations contribute, are precisely what surrealistic activity calls back into doubt. The neuter and contourless space into which surrealists wish to pour themselves is the contrary of the continuous locus of history." Surrealism, attempting escape through its private window on chaos, and otherwise cultivating peculiar vertigo, remains shackled to the conclusion that life has only one possibility: an insurrection against logic. Pascal, not to mention others, might have seen reasons that the mind does not own, but his entire attitude would necessarily belie him as a proponent of great delusion. Emmanuel, pondering universal value and value itself, is prepared to admit that "the universal, this psychological aspect of the universe, is a caricature of the All, which each new precision of language alienates from its model . . . a frustration by which man disinherits himself without cease." But the surreal-

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ists, not correctly aware, attempt to enter upon a "mythical combat," for their efforts to reject the traditional order still encounter the difficulties inherent in employing language without concept in order to avoid the prevailing function of words. How could a surrealist justify publication, or any other form of communication? Emmanuel grants that André Breton has come to grips with an eternal, but it is perverted to an eternal nothing; not even the greatest mystic "has seen what Breton hopes to *perceive*." No one has more completely posed the question to the centrifugal surrealists than Pierre Emmanuel: "Does man, deprived of everything, even of his being, abandon himself to the pantheistic unknown, or does he become the omnipotent Presence of the unknown? That this ultimate contradiction may be raised, in terms of the surrealist effort, would seem to prove that Breton has never been able to choose between an absolute hypertrophy of the consciousness and the pure and simple denial that consciousness exists."

Aware of consciousness, however, and addicted to a pseudo-mystic vocabulary, surrealism courts the Tohu-Bohu while it operates merely as a naive prestidigitation dedicated to finding a way to plunge the mind into "its own absence." And all this in spite of the certainty that the mystical and enlightening experience has moved and is moving on a planetary level. Lest he be misunderstood by what he means when writing of mysticism, Emmanuel points to "the establishment of a spiritual tension" between mystics and God:

As for the God of these mystics, He is essentially a Being to which they are joined from the very interior of their limits, *that it is not in their being to transgress*. The ravishing ecstasy is not the contractual term of the path which the mystic treads: quite the contrary, this ecstasy must be considered as an accident, the mystic would say a grace . . . the mystic path is an exact vigil, the ever increasing awareness of a Being known by all being. To act in the presence of this Being and in the line of interior progress, from the top to the bottom of the scale of action, without ever ceasing to be one's self: that is quite the contrary of a disincarnation, an angelification, a magic. Teresa of Avila loses no stature when she gives practical advice to the daughters of Carmel: better, it is the same Teresa. No one more than the mystic, is aware of the torture of limits: however he knows that by them he has a grasp on the Being, and the Being has a grasp on him.

AND language and letters? Simply enough, Emmanuel holds that literature does not completely suffice although he is quite aware of the orders of grandeur made possible by the pen. Also, the position is held in view of the criticism directed against surrealism. Emmanuel is sure of his position; he takes, believes, and writes out his completion with Cartesian assurance. The most exalted humanism offers no salvation, for it is impossible for man to take his own measure by means determined from and for himself alone. The

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appearance of success and the impingements of felicity are meaningless unless the effort is operative on a higher level. "The risk of words is greater in our time than during any other period," and the simple urge to participate fails to cope fully with "man's necessity to prove to himself that he exists." In an essay on *La Liberté Guide Nos Pas*, a work which was written during four years of World War II, Emmanuel entertains doubts that his own work delivered itself sufficiently, that this war-volume managed to enter the pure duration of being. Whatever the failure, it does not arise from the poet's ambition as an artist, nor does it stem from his inability to take the pulse of war or to write a war-poem in the style of *et alii*. He would vault to the following concept: "To center ourselves in the total Act of the species, in which we share and which shares in us; to maintain in ourselves nobility in effort, evidence of superabundant life, inseparable from every vast and enduring plain: there, I imagine, is the essential of this ethic of enthusiasm which, tomorrow, will sing in revolutions."

The pitfalls are numerous, and Emmanuel offers fundamental caution in his *La Voie du Poete Nouveau*, a chapter in *Poésie Raison Ardente*. While finding his own poetry, a poet must remember to remain with the essential and still be on guard against putting new labels on old bottles, or of trying to put a label on no bottle at all. Poetry, its concept, its execution, all must be compelling by their originality and provocative by a clear exposition of the obscure world common to all and undescribed until the emergence of the clearer vision. Poets flinch when "influences" are indicated; their force is abated by these backward glances. Also, the reality is never seen in an instant, in a brilliant memory, or in a fleeting impression. The marvel is lodged in "the permanency, in each one of us, of a common destiny which unfolds like a play, without repeating itself, about a few central figures, from whom everything proceeds; and the meaning of this situation must always be further elucidated. This is the sort of evidence that keeps poetry alive: man is not what he appears, and he could not be satisfied with what he seizes from himself."

The spoken word is, in this elucidation of humanity, sidereal, for language itself has particular significance for Emmanuel. He returns to the problem with frequency, since he sees the action of speech as the badge of man's ultimate being and unity. Unfortunately, according to Emmanuel, this human faculty has become atomized and fissionable in the modern world since it is now related preponderantly to things by reason of its communicative virtues. The modern scheme of life is like a web, spun from object to object, and words, like irresponsible spiders, race from thing to thing instead of remaining at the center of their symmetry and meaning. An exploration of the objective universe, whether it be conducted in panic or with fine logic, collides ceaselessly with the irrational and thereby furnishes the cataclysm for anguish

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and frustration. In his 1943 essay on language and history, Emmanuel insists that language is for nobler things: "Everything which concerns man is language, and not only speech in the narrow sense. And language, in each of its modes, attains its end when totality lives in the aspect. Each time that this principle is lost from view, all that is human undergoes an essential alteration: the return to the true language therefore postulates the grasp for unity."

The future struggle is not the one which the Greeks left to us, the ancient and faltering attempt to conquer a greater knowledge of man and the cosmos. A vaster conflict is in store: the struggle to understand the *logos* which, lodged between time and space and yet beyond them both, still moves within the pale of comprehension and communicability. The true direction is towards the autonomy of the consciousness; Emmanuel holds that there is no laboratory in which to work towards this new articulation, beyond what has existed completely from the beginning: the Word. And poetry has forgotten how to explore this anciently charted sea.

ONE section of *Poésie Raison Ardente* is entitled *Le Poète et le Mythe*, and there is ample license to allow that one of Emmanuel's principal points of inquiry is directed towards the *mythos*. The standards saluted in these four essays are a definition and development of the ultra-Bergsonian position previously approached. Emmanuel initiates his exposition by observing that no one is more aware of "the cosmic power of the Word" than the poet, and no one is more uninformed of the things to which words apply. Therefore, the poet instinctively contributes to the abolition of things; he polarizes things to silence, this silence which is "the breath of everything." Thus, innocence is invoked by the poet who restores the world to its pre-articulate state. Albeit temporarily, he induces "the prideful nostalgia for the pure nothing" and is ancillary to creation insofar as the creation is attainable. This reversion is the ceaseless occupation of the enlightened poet, who carries his consciousness through all things remembered and forgotten until the arrival at "an identity with Divine thought." Then, in a visionary and cyclical sweep that seems curiously born of Hugo and remotely cognate to Proust, Emmanuel weighs the "fearsome proximity" of the *nunc*, the immediacy confronting man and poet alike: "Modern man, proud of his certainties, believes that he sees a new reality . . . he believes himself delivered from his original terrors, which, more frightful than ever, are amassed behind the dikes of *his* reality, which gives way, which always gives way, in spite of the feverish and beaverish efforts of reason and science."

The poet is obliged not only to dispel this error, but also to clarify what Baudelaire otherwise terms the "confuses paroles." Self-assigned to an unrelenting search for "the first day of the universe," he must undertake "an immense

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interpretation of forces, forms, and relationships" in order to restore the contemplated object to its proper placement in "the cosmic hierarchy." Emmanuel is opposed to delusion or inadequacy: "The thing, and through it, the complete cosmos demand to be reintegrated in the natural order: an exigency which corresponds to ours, of being reintegrated with the spiritual order. When these two exigencies become one in man, there comes to him the vocation of being a poet, philosopher, or mystic. The only things which diverge are the paths which lead to the unity, depending upon whether the departure is from the thing, man or God."

The poet, then, strives to live with "the thing" so that he may breathe in the light of the unity with which it phosphoresces. The task is not a simple one in terms of poetry, for the relations between the poet and the object are entangled and lost "in the successive or simultaneous representations with which he furnishes himself." And here Emmanuel is quick to caution that the poetic effort should not resolve itself into "an extravagant mental soliloquy" simply because the poet has no "name" for the experience born of an object-inspired "anguish." It is equally important to understand that this "anguish" over things is not akin to the nausea which existentialists profess, that it is rather the direction to a relevant understanding of more than things themselves. It affords a perhaps unique means of arriving at the truth that there is falsehood in the view that the ends of man are different from those of the universe. And herein lies the reason for Emmanuel's mythophilism: he sees in the great myths a correction of the misconception that humanity has no function in the eternal perturbations, for the action effected by the hero is in immediate rhythm with the cosmic motion even and above all at the moment of the hero's succumbing to what passes for destiny. There is a question to be asked: is the "reciprocal determination" between man and his sphere still possible to experience and know, or have the frames of reference through which the mind operates and the mind itself moved too far to allow return to the pristine comprehensibility? Emmanuel would hardly allow this pessimism; he observes that the oldest impulse of life is towards change, and the basic problems arising from the earth remain the same. Perhaps the latter are now more active since the great preoccupation is directed towards the universe as a thing. Still, there is need of a catharsis through a new knowledge, acquired violently, in order to control the "psychic revolution" which has not yet found its term or its terms. This violence will be caused by breaking with the dedication to a knowledge of things and will be justified by the acknowledgment that the proper pursuit is after an understanding of the anguish caused by things. A return to the *mythos* is in order: "Today more than ever, the problem which is posed to man is a problem of knowledge: we have in the actual chaos all the elements of a new humanism; it remains for the spirit of this humanism to be found

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and, to tell the whole story, for its creative lyricism to be ascertained. If we fail to render ourselves masters of the law of our becoming, we are, whatever may be the power of our means, threatened with a barbarity which will turn upon us spiritual weapons that we shall have forgotten to use."

It will be in this fashion that man will cease to be at the mercy of every chance encounter with the world. He will be restored to his primal dignity and importance, and will again serve as the agent by which the world is imagined and known. This future is not merely an interior projection by Emmanuel, nor is it another Utopia. Emmanuel does not hope for an absence of antagonism. On the contrary, there will still be *epos* and drama for the poets. But the combat will assume its proper and heroic level as man returns to an enlightened effort towards his becoming in the world, and the world's becoming in him. This new understanding, which Emmanuel describes as the "complete physics of man and the universe, of the man-universe," is to be the discipline of the incipient age, a time of exodus from the darkness which covers the humanity that blindly hurls its potential against itself.

Notes on New Contributors

ISABEL HARRISS BARR is a sculptress who writes plays and poetry. RICHARD JAMES DOUAIRE, a director of the Liturgical Arts Society, is a personal friend of Rouault. JOHN M. FEIN taught Spanish at Harvard and is now in charge of courses in Latin American literature at Duke. MARTIN TURNELL, a young English critic, recently wrote *The Novel in France*, published by New Directions in this country. VIOLA MEYNELL, the daughter of Alice and Wilfrid Meynell, recently published in England *Francis Thompson and Wilfred Meynell*. KURT REINHARDT, of the German department at Stanford, recently wrote *The Existentialist Revolt*, which will be reviewed in our next issue. SISTER M. ROSALIE, O.P., studied at Laval, Havana, and Catholic University. VICTOR J. SAMPON studied at Université de Liège and teaches at Marquette. R. J. SCHOECK took his doctorate at Princeton and is on the faculty at Cornell. MARCELLE VON MAYER, who was born in France and studied at the Sorbonne and the Ecole du Louvre, teaches at Trinity College, Washington, D.C. ROBERT WILBERFORCE, the grandson of Henry Wilberforce who was Newman's lifelong friend, is in the British Foreign Service.

Alice Meynell:

An Incident in her Reading-Life

BY VIOLA MEYNELL

A WRITER'S own output might seem to others to be the main part of his literary life. But in fact it might be into his reading life that he poured even more of his passionate sensibility. Certainly Alice Meynell's reading life was a subjective experience of an intensity beyond that of authorship. She was perhaps remarkable as a poetry-lover in that she really did need less rest, less food, less comfort or change or company because of living in literature. She had less concern for securing herself the practical needs of every day than anyone one could easily meet. This did not mean she was oblivious of daily comforts and discomforts—she had them, but they were literary ones.

Poetry-loving is usually kept to its own department and does not intrude on the practical considerations proper to the daily round. But Alice Meynell had, in her mother, an example of constant and overwhelming susceptibility to greatness. I suppose her mother wept for the things we all weep for, but she also wept for more. When she took her two little girls, of whom Alice was one, to Stratford to see the room where Shakespeare had lived, she burst into impassioned weeping for the Shakespeare who was no more.

As regards the quality of Alice Meynell's judgment in reading, it was rarely idiosyncratic, though her praise or blame might be a little more or a little less, or sooner, than that of others—as when she liked Swinburne less than her contemporaries liked him, and loved Coventry Patmore far more. There is so much ground that is bound to be common ground among critics. But within the bounds of agreement she could still be original, her praise avoiding the trite sound it so easily could have had. And this was true of her dealings with Shakespeare. It was remarked in her *Life* that she never made a *dull* reference to Shakespeare, though he haunted her writing and her days. It is somehow always a pleasure to meet with those who do not merely appreciate their Shakespeare but are apparently made of him, as the highlight in their past and present and, in expectation, of their future—and who, though they may speak with uncertainty of their aunts and of their cousins, refer to a Shakespeare heroine as if she were in the room. (Edward Fitzgerald was one of these.) As for Alice Meynell, it has been told how even into her last years her newest thoughts were about this oldest of her feelings. She wrote: "We all know Shakespeare as it were privately, and thus words about him touch our very

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autobiography." Certainly in speaking of Shakespeare she spoke of her inmost life.

She had that requisite of a safe commentator, the power of being untouched by mere novelty or reaction. The eye she fastened upon the centuries was a searching one. It seems strange now that praise of the seventeenth-century poets should have been, when she spoke it, original and independent. Again in her *Life*, her love of that period of "spirituality" and "light" is told as is her comparatively little love of the century that followed. It was in the seventeenth century that "English had but to speak in order to say something exquisite." She gathered up rich fragments of that time, seeing Andrew Marvell "cherry-cheeked, caught in the tendrils of his vines and melons," or Vaughan's poetry as "this meditation of a soul condemned and banished into life." Of Marvell she writes: "He, as a garden poet, expected the accustomed Muse to lurk about the fountain-heads, within the caves, and by the walks and statues of the gods, keeping the tryst of the seventeenth-century garden-convention. And yet this poet two or three times met a Muse he had hardly looked for among the trodden paths; a spiritual creature had been waiting behind a laurel or an apple-tree. You find him coming away from such a divine ambush a wilder and a simpler man." Of Cowley she says that he wrote the language of love, but left it cooler than he found it. "What the conceits of Lovelace and the rest did not do," she says, "was done by Cowley's quenching breath; the language of Love began to lose by him. But even then, who could have foretold what the loss at a later date would be!"

The extolling of the seventeenth century was the chief feature, when it appeared, of an anthology she made called *The Flower of the Mind*. It was about this anthology, by the way, that Walter de la Mare once wrote a charming sentence. "Many years ago," he says in a note in an anthology of his own, "I had the curious pleasure of reading a little book, and one in small print too, (Alice Meynell's lovely *Flower of the Mind*) by English glow-worm light. The worm was lifting its green beam in the grasses of a cliff by the sea, and shone the clearer the while because it was during an eclipse of the moon."

And now it is in connection with a poem in this anthology that the small incident occurred which it may be amusing to recall.

The poem concerned is well known to everyone. They read it and sing it. It is Ben Jonson's "Drink to me only with thine eyes." In the notes which she wrote to the anthology Alice Meynell made the following comment on this poem: "I have already had the temerity to find fault, for a blunder of meaning, with a passage of this most famous lyric, where it says the contrary to what it would say." The two lines which she maintained said the contrary to what they would say are:

But might I of Jove's nectar sip
I would not change for thine.

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She thought that the poet, by something like a slip of the pen, was saying "Had I Jove's nectar I would not change it for thine," thus belittling his love instead of flattering her.

Various correspondents must have written to her pointing out that this was an incorrect interpretation. But in vain. She was the victim of an ambiguity in the lines, and the worst of an ambiguity is that once you have entered into one of its meanings, there—often—you stay. At any rate Alice Meynell saw no other reading but hers, for her note continues with some asperity: "For this I have encountered the anger rather than the argument of those who cannot admire a pretty lyric but they must hold reason itself to be in error rather than allow that a line of it has chanced to get turned in the rhyming."

Is it possible that she has thrown you too into a similar confusion? For her meaning has its persuasiveness, and it is possible to be blindfolded by it. Or alternatively you may be unable to see any reading but the right one. But there is a key which opens the door to both readings, and it is this: it would certainly be the poet's mistake if he imagined himself in possession of Jove's nectar and refused to change it for "thine." But suppose he is imagining himself in possession of his love's nectar, and then is unwilling to exchange it for Jove's:

But might I of Jove's nectar sip
I would not change for thine.

—thine which I have . . . then the poet is of course quite in order.

One might amuse oneself by making a small private collection of really good specimens of ambiguity—one form of the "curiosities of literature." Such a collection might even be illustrated, or at any rate could be provided with a frontispiece in the shape of Millais's drawing of "The Return of the Prodigal Son." In this drawing the figures of the father and son are clasping each other in repentance and forgiveness, but their two heads are so drawn that either might belong to either body. Their faces are invisible, buried against each other, but the top of either head might fit on to either pair of shoulders.

To catch Alice Meynell in a reading-error is a triumph indeed. Her critical writings are witness to her acute subtle perception as a reader of the far and the near, the obvious and the recondite, in different languages. She scaled mountains of reading—and stumbled on this smallest of pebbles.

Rimbaud: Sixty Years After

BY MARGUERITE YERTA-MÉLÉRA

THE current terms, "la rimbaldité" and "le rimbaldisme," testify to the lively interest in Rimbaud, and it is only too obvious that the Rimbaud legend is enriched every day by some incident or scandal. Thus, it is not yet entirely presumptuous or academic to continue to speak of him. On the contrary, a dose of courage is necessary when one embarks upon a subject concerning the poet, for the "rimbaldiens" are numerous, often intelligent, sometimes skilled, always emotional, and eternally dedicated to being at one another's throats. It is pertinent to wonder whether or not the final word has been or ever will be written about the poet, his life, his accomplishments, and all his contradictions. Even Cocteau, his admirer, declared that "Rimbaud becomes as encumbering as Victor Hugo."

Dead to the world for sixty years and dead to literature for more than seventy-five years, Rimbaud continues to be widely read and bitterly discussed; his *Poèmes*, *Une Saison en Enfer*, *Illuminations*, correspondence, and business reports are scrutinized with anxiety. Every gesture or word of his childhood has been brought to light, and psychoanalysis has been attempted. The graphologists have examined each line of his writing, each erasure, each stroke of his pen; a sort of criticism by microscope has been applied. His manuscripts are disputed in the Salle Drouot. Even the philatelists are active: there is a 1951 Arthur Rimbaud stamp. At Charleville, where he was born, he has a museum and a section in the municipal library. He has his review, *Le Bateau Ivre*, *Bulletin des Amis de Rimbaud*. He has enjoyed all sorts of editions, in all formats, at every price-level. He has his biographers, his bibliographers, his hagiographers. He has his exasperated exegetes, his scenarists, his translators, and his imitators. The raging squalls and swampy calm of Rimbaud's work would inevitably produce assonance and dissonance, but these consequences are almost beyond belief.

Rimbaud had wished violently to be an author although he renounced letters in a rage when he was scarcely twenty years old. He labeled his own work as "stupid, rotten, and disgusting." He flew into a rage when his literary life was mentioned. Seizures of anxiety and madness? His Bohemian life in Paris had been nothing more than a continuous upheaval. Verlaine? Then there were the wanderings through Europe: Belgium, England, Germany, Holland, Italy; from Bordeaux to Charleville is seven hundred kilometers. It was a walking sickness, and Rimbaud traveled to the East after vomiting his literature upon the West. He crossed the Somali wastes eleven times on horseback (a twenty-day passage), without escort amid all the brigandage of the

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desert. He did not care to wear a helmet in the sun, only a policeman's hat. He stopped to teach the Koran to the Arab children, and he rode with the natives at Aden. "Folly to some, scandal to others," says Saint Paul; still, everything dealing with Rimbaud, dead or alive, is surrounded with agitation. He became a foreman in Cyprus, but there was a fight with the engineer and the laborers. There was a disagreement with the bosses at Aden, an attempt on his life at Harrar; the final failure came with the empress, Taitout. Then, sickness and seventeen days across the desert. Black months. The hospital at Marseille. The amputation, the false recovery, the relapse. At the age of thirty-seven, death was as difficult as life. The long, last agony was all anguish in spite of the final light and hope.

And afterwards? What did Charleville, his native city, think of him? His sister, Isabelle, writes with exasperation, "Whatever is reported, they will say, 'That's just about what to expect from that rascal, that tramp, that bum, that cheat, that drunkard, that fool . . .'" Isabelle Rimbaud and Paternie Berrichon, the poet's brother-in-law, took the trouble to have his work edited. His writings brought in four hundred and fifty francs in six years, and his editors were slandered as money-lovers. Forty years after Rimbaud's death, the nieces decided to claim a portion of the royalties. There was a lawsuit, and much to-do in the world of letters at Paris. The nieces' claim was denied.

1940 and the occupation: Rimbaud is read more than ever; he is openly or clandestinely edited in Belgium, Holland and Canada.

AFTER the war, someone writes to the newspapers that he has found forty thousand lines of Rimbaud's poetry in Abyssinia. This is too much: forty thousand lines are nearly six or seven times more than the known work of the poet. We can forget about this fantastic claim, but we cannot forget the café on the Boulevard Saint-Michel where *Une Saison en Enfer* is acted out in a back room. The setting, the background, the props, and everything else is done in brightest vermilion, a fiery shade from hell. There are four actors, all with red hair and masks. Dressed in black suits and wearing high collars and top hats, they represent Rimbaud and his variations. They declaim the text of the *Saison*. One of the four Rimbauds is a woman: the Foolish Virgin. One after another, they discard their hats, collars, and suits until they are clad only in black tights. The poet is completely exposed. The criticism starts: "Yes, the wizardly text is there, but where is the poet?" Nicolas Bataille and Akakia Viala have missed the point?

The Rimbaudians remain calm, and the *Bateau Ivre* restricts itself to announcing current printings. Yet, there are new theories about Rimbaud, and an Italian promises some unedited correspondence. There is the Pléiade edition. A group of critics pursues the Christian idea in Rimbaud's work, as if in quest

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of the golden vein that zigzags through the layers of earth and stone to glisten here and there on the surface. After *Un coeur sous une soutane* and the *Album Zutique*, it is admitted that the three obscene sonnets are by Rimbaud, "the only impudences that Rimbaud ever wrote." M. Gengoux presents a thesis that starts with *Voyelles* and explains everything on a basis of occultism. Kanter sees nothing but integral simplicity; others find the way in Sodom. M. de Bouillane de Lacoste, a longtime admirer of the poet from Ardennes, triumphantly sustains his thesis at the Sorbonne: the *Illuminations* were written after the *Saison en Enfer*, in 1874 or even 1875, and the entire meaning of the poet's work is therefore altered. The researcher arrives at his conclusions though a careful study of the manuscripts. His opponents object: "Are you sure that you were working with the originals? Are you certain that you were not examining manuscript copies made by Rimbaud himself?" It was precisely in 1875 that Delahaye answered Verlaine: "Poetry from Rimbaud? His spirit has been flattened for some time. I really believe that he does not remember that he ever wrote at all." André Breton, the high priest of surrealism whose taste for a squabble did not diminish with the years, appears on the scene and accuses M. de Bouillane of pursuing class interest in his research, of being bourgeois.

Politics aside, however, the disputes are essentially benign until the affair of *Chasse Spirituelle*. This work had been entrusted to Verlaine's in-laws, and it was considered lost since there was no reason to believe that Mme. Verlaine might be sympathetic towards the literary production of her husband's friend. All the Rimbaudians jump when the cry is raised in 1951: "*La Chasse Spirituelle* has been found! The *Mercure de France* is publishing it!" Bound in *demi-luxe*, the little volume sells like hotcakes—until the alarm is sounded. "*La Chasse Spirituelle* is a forgery! It is apocryphal! Treason! The critics have been duped! They are malefactors!" The players who staged the vermilion *Saison en Enfer* in the Latin Quarter begin to sneer. "Ha! So we did not understand Rimbaud! Well! We are pleased to announce that we are the authors of this long poem in which you recognized the master's touch!" The collectors do not complain, for the scandalous edition is another item for the museum at Charleville. The excitement subsides.

SOME critics assert that Rimbaud's influence is on the wane. It has been a long time since Gerard Bauer, an expert on Rimbaud, declared in the *Annales*: "I am perhaps mistaken, but I do not think that Rimbaud is a very great poet." M. Etiemble, of *Temps Modernes*, saw a reaction against Rimbaud's manner as early as 1939. When Caillois speaks of Rimbaud-Lautréamont-Mallarmé, he reveals that he would like "to be done with this influence which is profound and widespread only as a result of error. Rimbaud and

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Lautréamont have both condemned the style and the values which they had attempted to establish in their youth." There is talk of "Rimbaud's defeat." Tedesco screams, "Death to you, Rimbaud, assassin, dog . . ."

But Rimbaud persists, and the current game is to find the authors that the young genius may have pillaged or plagiarized. There is no end to the suggestions: Victor Hugo, Chateaubriand, Gérard de Nerval, Baudelaire, Banville, Jules Verne, Poe, Maurice de Guérin. Of course, the question of sources and influences is difficult, but is it just to say that Rimbaud was not very much concerned about the origin of the figures and expressions which came to him. His genius was visual, and he was often in pursuit of contrary visions. He had his own theory of the *Seer* that he hoped to become by virtue of the "long, immense, and orderly disorganization of all his senses." As a sensitive adolescent, he had given an entire winter to books on occultism and cabalism. It is he who said, "I am another," and "I am thought." When he composed *Une Saison en Enfer* in his barn at Roche, "he cries, he stamps, he sobs, he blasphemes . . . he does nothing but walk all through the night." And Hell? He was there (like Saint John: "I do not know whether it was in body or in spirit"), and he was able to write an *Apocalypse* for literature. The Spirit was multiplied in him; abandoning him, it left him a demon of filth, like those Christ sent among the swine. Then came the period of baseness, the moment of the "painfully obscene" sonnets.

Rimbaud's power comes in no small measure from his Hermeticism; at least, this explains the multiplicity of interpretations which are applied to his works *in parte* and *in toto*. As the Princess of the Palatinate used to say of the Gospel, ". . . each one may make his own little religion" from these writings, and each reader may discover or rediscover his thoughts or obsessions in Rimbaud's verses. Like the Scripture, the poet's work endures all exegesis. Why should it not engender heresy? Did it not at first beget faith? It offers itself as an enigma, as a mosaic of enigmas, even of charades. M. Antoine Adam has recently presented in the *Bateau Ivre* the curious interpretation of certain *Illuminations*; it is as just as it is sacrilegious from a Christian point of view. It seems ordained that everything to be said on Rimbaud will always be exaggerated in one sense or the other. The Tharauds, following the poet's tracks across Africa, found nothing but traces of "True Scale," an ascetic and generous trader who was almost a missionary. Jérôme Tharaud, in his speech at the dedication of the Place Arthur Rimbaud at Djibouti, declared, "There is something prodigious about this disgusted poet who finds relief for his boredom in only the most humble tasks, and it is true that the menial things alone manage to satisfy this miscreant. I do not wish to force anything, but when I think of Rimbaud, I cannot separate him from Monseigneur Jarousseau and the other Capuchins with whom I so often spoke of him at Harrar."

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Rimbaud, then, has certain universal qualities, and he continues as a sort of international poet. In England, he is admired, studied, calumniated, scarcely less than in France. The *Time and Tide* asserts, "Rimbaud is coming more and more to be considered the great European poet of the last quarter of the Nineteenth century." Another review goes farther: ". . . of the entire nineteenth century." Also, the Americans have not failed to pay their homage. *Après le Déluge* has not been filmed yet, but *le Bateau Ivre* has been put on the screen. At New York, ballets have been staged which draw their themes from some of the *Illuminations*, and there has been a suite inspired by *Parade*, *Villes*, *Phrase*, *Royauté*, *Being Beauteous* and *Départ*. George Slocombe of the *New York Herald-Tribune* has observed the curious parallels in the lives of Rimbaud and Gauguin. Germany has scarcely had time to be occupied with Rimbaud; and Dehmel, who translated *l'Oeuvre*, is dead. There has been activity in Italy: M. Nicoletti has offered *l'Inferno di Rimbaud*, and another Italian has promised to edit some Ethiopian correspondence that is now sleeping in Switzerland (we know of its existence, but we also know that its owners are not very enthusiastic).

And so, sixty years after, we find that there have been controversies, dissertations, quarrels and mature discussions, but it is to be remembered that the genuine Rimbaudian is the young man who, intent and puzzled, continues to read Rimbaud. His numbers continue to be legion. Why? A 1953 brand of revolt? It is found in Rimbaud. Anxiety, 1953? This is present, too. And more, besides, for there is a timely exhortation: ". . . let us accept the influxes of vigor, of real compassion. And, at the dawn, armed with a burning patience, we shall enter into the shining cities."

—TR. SPIRE PITOU

Henry de Montherlant: The First Decade

BY SPIRE PITOU

TO GIVE a complete picture of Henry de Montherlant's literary accomplishments between 1920 and 1953 would entail a lengthier discussion than is possible here by reason of the drama, poetry, and prose involved. Also, it would appear pertinent to select the first decade of Montherlant's development since he responded so quickly to the academic, physical, and religious training offered at Sainte-Croix in Neuilly. Montherlant's grasp for mental, muscular, and spiritual conclusions is obvious from the beginning; his dedication to the charm, violence, and wisdom of the pagan and Christian traditions of Rome, France, and Spain are evident before 1930. His principal effort of the thirties, the tetralogy collectively entitled *Les Jeunes Filles* (1936-1939), is available in English translation and offers variations of a theme presented in *La Petite Infante de Castille* (1929). His provisory but no less perverse collaborationism in the forties is well known. The present essay remains within the limits of 1920-1930 while forgetting that Henry de Montherlant is still alive and the subject of boulevard comment.

Montherlant made his debut with *La Relève du Matin*. Looking back at this work, first published in October, 1921, and containing a piece signed as early as the spring of 1916, it is requisite to observe that the quality of the work is marked by war and youth. Ten separate compositions constitute the volume. Unity is provided by tradition and by the two subjects that recur in the diverse prose techniques employed: the youth in his teens and the soldier on the threshold of life or death. Each type is susceptible to forces that extrude the qualities of humanity, and Montherlant presents the conviction that the life of the spirit thrives best in the blood of youth. Possessed of "the sense of beauty, the desire for virtue, the taste for the Divine," adolescents are "for the first and last time capable of suffering; they are at the zenith of life . . . these gamins of thirteen to seventeen years." The disordered and dislocated life is God's field of action. Montherlant pauses to consider the fact that the Christ child and the man Christ are known to all, but that man himself, eternally dedicated to the *hic* and the *nunc*, lacks even a casual image of the Redeemer between childhood in the temple and manhood in the world. The roots of tragedy grow strong in the oblivion reserved for youth. The age of thirteen is crucial. At this instant, the adolescent is unheeded by his mother, who no longer has him in her arms or under her thumb; he will be ignored by his father until the moment of glory or money. It is pathetic that a child

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should weep on his first day of school, but it is doom that he should learn to return to his home more slowly each year. The remedy for the rejections? Montherlant contends that religious education, not always properly alert, lapses by being corporately unable or unwilling to impel a creative crisis: the later and more serious disintegrations arise from early failures, and youth should therefore be afforded a solid fulcrum to rise on the day when faculties are needed in fullest measure. But, ignored by parents and over-protected by teachers of the pseudo-manner, this same youth alternates without a timetable between calm and frustration, assurance and rebellion. The motto of fulfilling education, at least in France, should be *Date pueris iram*, for only trial will nourish and sustain in the proper image. The thesis is controversial, and Montherlant anticipates objections in his peripatetic preface, *Le Jeudi de Bagatelle*, a dialogue between an educator-priest and "moi." The most serious criticism entertained is the feasibility of the plan.

On the less ideological side, Montherlant offers a convincing picture of the rivalries, heroism, failures, joys, uncertainty, and dreams of life in a school with a front parlor. There is a deft sketch of the student who always awakes to find himself in difficulty. Two short stories are well done: one underlines man's indifference to his brother's fate, and the other gives perhaps too cruel an insight into a mother whose son has won the Croix de Guerre for deeds that bring a silent death. Perhaps the greatest compliment that may be paid to *La Relève du Matin* is its indication of greater things and its attempts to deal effectively with incipient weakness and strength. Montherlant's beginnings are bold.

THE first group of novels, entitled *La Jeunesse d'Alban de Bricoule*, contains two works, *Le Songe* and *Les Bestiaires*; the thematic denominators are regeneration by bloodshed, virile emergence in the face of peril, and catharsis by violence. Montherlant attains perfection and nobility in these two books, which have induced one of his severest critics to allow that the psychological directions followed "are not only in equilibrium, but they are developed in a dimension and at a level which give to Montherlant's lyricism the sense of an introduction to greatness." The time covered in the first novel, which was begun in 1919 and published in 1922, is a span of six months, March to August of 1918: a succession first of German and then of French successes on the western front. The novel is divided into two parts of ten chapters each; the French retreats serve as a backdrop for the first part, and the German reversals constitute the setting for the last half of the novel. The manner in which Montherlant manages the background of the action is somewhat akin to the technique employed by the movies by reason of the manner in which the reader is shuttled back and forth between the front

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lines and that part of France still left to the children, the women, and the infirm. The central figure is, of course, Alban de Bricoule. The principal characters at the front are Prinnet, his comrade-in-arms; Père de Pestour, who hears confessions and gives blessings to the confused, the weary, and the wounded; and Chien, the inevitable dog, who is shot by Alban in a singular moment of panic. The women remain somewhat removed from the scene of war, except Dominique, who pursues a program of self-perfection in athletics and later becomes a nurse without winning generous love from Alban. A third group must be acknowledged, the little people who appear for an instant: a German wearing his red badge of courage and eternally grateful for a last small comfort; the poilu who sits and talks while life ebbs from the hole where his stomach used to be; and all the others who appear so curiously eager to return to a place on the medieval portal. Montherlant's mastery of style is already indisputable. He excels on the level of the chapter, scene, paragraph, sentence, or phrase. His ninth chapter, devoted to a description of daybreak in the front lines, is as surely done as a prose-poem by Baudelaire. The pages describing Dominique's race against Suzanne Kestner are superb: he who reads runs. Alban's first trip to the battlefields of France is compelling. Feeling the pulse of "his exalted patriotism, his fervor for the Christian thing, his thirst for effective action, his desire to know," Alban beholds the churned and burnt land for the first time and cannot decide whether he is gazing upon Dante's Dis or Calvary itself. The scene between Alban and a surrendering German is equal to Hemingway's best; and the last pages of the first part of the novel, where Alban fumbles to know how badly Prinnet is hurt, match O'Henry's finest touch and Sartre's wriest grimace. Also, it is not easy to forget Alban reaching for his own left arm and touching his own fingers by way of relief. The imagery of war is authentic: starshells burst as if hit by a second shell; puffs of black smoke hang thick and concise near the road like trees; barbed wire stretches against the darkness like another Milky Way; a dead horse is raped from its ancient socum. Montherlant employs colors, sounds, tastes, and odors to vitalize his prose: grass, hay, loam, crushed apples, night, vanilla, rain, ripe peaches; and stale sweat and cold blood; and others more acrid or even merely nauseous. Witness the lady who arrives with her chauffeur among the German wounded. Completely armed with camera and dainty scissors, she is pleased to snap pictures of the most suffering, to reap her harvest of buttons and Iron Crosses from the field-gray uniforms. If war produces strange things, victory is more of a catalysis for the monstrous. Slaves have always started at this word, and "the little clerks, the little bookkeepers, the great race of the stoop-shouldered and pot-bellied all stand up straight again and feel a prouder blood race through their veins." And all through the fear, indifference, stupidity, and violence, there are constant and

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well chosen references to the classics, which Montherlant knows so well: Hesiod, Homer, Plutarch, Tacitus, Vergil. Alban, his protagonist, is well named; he alludes to and patterns some of his thought after Caesar, and Horace's *Dulce et decorum est* is in large part the motive for his seeking enlistment with an infantry company. But there are more immediate influences: Joseph de Maistre's view of war as an expiation, and the Barresian concepts of nationalism, love, and intuitive immediacy. However, all these attitudes are modified by the beginnings of "alternance." It is this aspect of his philosophy which sets Montherlant apart from Péguy and leads him to claim a position beyond Barrès. On the level of the literal theme of the novel, this point of view assumes the form of another awareness of the paradox of war: fealty to the commandments and the need of killing the enemy, the urge to create and the dedication to destruction, the gun and the goodness. Montherlant makes it clear that he considers the issue of the oppositeness of absolute values and their human corporeity, as brought into focus by war, to be operative on broader planes: "Thus have I lived, knowing the vanity of things, but acting as if I were their dupe . . . After having pretended to possess ambition and I did not have it, pretended to fear death and I did not fear it, pretended to have suffered and I have never suffered, pretended to wait and I awaited nothing, I would die while pretending to believe that my death serves, but persuaded that it is of no service and proclaiming that all is just."

Although *Les Bestiaires* (1926), the second and last novel of the *La Jeunesse d'Alban de Bricoule* series, might be expected to follow Alban through the few remaining months of war and on into the post-war period, the action takes place entirely before 1914. Most of the events transpire in or near Seville, and there are glimpses of Southern France, Madrid, and other localities in Southwestern Europe where bulls are raised privately and killed publicly. Montherlant's choice of a topic for the sequel to *Le Songe* is not surprising. Hemingway was to observe later in the first chapter of *Death in the Afternoon* that the "only place where you could see life and death, i.e., violent death now that the wars were over, was in the bull ring." Alban's tauromania leads him to the Cuesta farm, where he has his first encounter with spirited horses, sullen bulls, and Spanish women. The occasion is a *tienta*, the time of deciding which animals are to be reserved for a glorious death on the sand. Alban is possessed without pause. He haunts the taverns where the professionals nibble olives and sip manzanilla. He practices veronicas on the younger bulls. He goes to the municipal slaughter-house to practise the *descabello*, the mortal thrust over the horns and down behind the base of the skull to the spinal cord. He wins a notice in the newspapers and is invited to kill two bulls at a Red Cross benefit. Contrary to the advice of experts and the warnings of his

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inner self, he yields to his lady fair and picks an outlaw bull. The day of the *becerrada* arrives. He botches the first contest and is treated with courteous silence when he leaves the ring. The crowd cheers the dead bull as it is dragged from the arena, and no ear is cut for Alban. *Dies irae* and *Nulidad*. The climax is the struggle with the criminal bull, dubbed the wicked Angel. Alban redeems himself. Montherlant sees more than an opportunity for dramatic narrative in the national "sport" of Spain. He describes the ancient and Christian traditions surrounding the bull itself, and points to Clement VIII's removing the anathema previously placed on the *toreros*. Acknowledged to be a school for courage and an integral part of the Spanish patrimony, the bull fight is designed to be important in religious celebrations: the transportation of holy relics or of the Eucharist to a new church. Montherlant sees relevant significance in the fact that the canonization of Saint Teresa was accompanied by the death of more than two hundred bulls contributed by the convents that she founded; also that the Jesuits were moved to ask the chapter of Seville to supplement the religious services attending the canonization of Saint Ignatius Loyola with a magnificent *corrida*. Alban's redemption by victory is an apt application of blood as a symbol of life and death. It is clear that Montherlant's concept moves simultaneously on the tangible-narrative and the mystic-allegorical levels. The presence of the matadors in the penitential processions that pass through the streets of Seville during Holy Week is not merely a picturesque bit of local color by reason of Montherlant's attempts to portray the apocalyptic synthesis of the blood of the bull and the blood of the lamb in the hope of conveying the complete point of view of El Greco's countrymen as they witness the immolation of bulls under the hot sun. A comparison between Montherlant's *Mauvais Ange* and Melville's whale might suggest itself by reason of Melville's and Montherlant's dedication to the problem of evil, but the concepts and terms of expression are products of different cultures. The closest that Montherlant comes to Melville is the instant when the former observes that the newly released bull bounds around the ring "like a frightened fish in an aquarium." There is evidence of a closer influence by Stendhal, who might well have inspired Montherlant's predilection for the black-red dichromatism which lends itself so readily to his subject. It would be inept to leave *Les Bestiaires* without a final glimpse of the antagonist: "The black snout, surrounded by seal-whiskers, was dotted with damp pores arranged as regularly as the stars in the American flag. The bull alternately licked at each nostril—right, left, right, left—with a pink tongue streaked with black on each side like a campaign ribbon. There was an audible rasping as his tongue passed over his snout; his nostrils quivered, filled with an opaline water like holes dug at the seashore."

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IN A 1938 preface to his second group of novels, Montherlant admits that he skirted the national vice of France by attempting to intellectualize the Olympic games of 1924, but his enthusiasm for the subject belies this self-reproach. The effort to avoid the work-themes of the psychology, philosophy, and technology of sport in order to unfold the fellowship and the poetry is proper; and a grasp after the amplitude, exactness, and magnificence of a younger day is a high deed. *Les Olympiques*, in its present form, is a single volume that still retains the original titles of *Le Paradis à l'Ombre des Epées* and *Les Onze devant la Porte Dorée*. The *Paradis* contains a collection of three compositions which deal titularly with the glory of the playing field, Mlle. de Plemeur, and a football lesson in the park. The first essay accumulates the already abundant classical allusions and is in its turn composed of nearly a score of quasi-chapters which struggle to emblazon the theme of Hellenic Gaul. To wed Hermes and Athena, and to make it stick on the banks of the Seine, is an unusual task for even a thematic novelist. Montherlant sets his poems about Jacques Peyrony, a fifteen year old who plays outside right on a soccer team. Peyrony's foot is turned inwards most months of the year from centering pebbles across the sidewalk without measuring the corner-angle. His parents quarrel, his wind is good, and his eyes are always on the earth. Supremely confident and egotistically possessed of the power of being able to do more, he finds himself in possession of reality. Peyrony is a unique character in fiction, but Montherlant refuses to realize the possibilities of this splendid basis; instead, he deviates by offering a sketch of Mademoiselle's bandaged knee, a super-Lamartinian movement through the shadows that lengthen over the stadium—any wealthy alumnus would weep—and a repetition of the flesh-blood-joy theme that is by now over-perfumed with vocabulary. Montherlant cannot quite twist rhetoric by the neck at this point: too many Greek gods, too much Renaissance, too many ecstasies and paroxysms about muscles, profiles, and knee-caps. The *fascies* keeps falling apart. Mlle. de Plemeur, a fictionalized three hundred meter champion, is a point of departure for Montherlant's reflections about the esthetic qualities of the female form. He offers another tribute to Hebert's *Education physique féminine* and naively underlines the difference between the body and the flesh: *sui generis*, the eternal flower, and "sport, like religion, is sometimes a derivative." The blasphemy might exist, Pascal's anguish might continue, but the French still obtain a way from boredom in nuance. The football lesson in the park is a curious colloquy between Peyrony, a half-back, and the dense obscurity. Montherlant closes his treatise on sportism with a note that "life is not a contract of mutual sympathy." The attack on sentimentalism is curiously at odds with his developed motifs.

The second *Olympique*, now an in-extenso series of pieces in prose and poetry, was originally a forty page effort entitled *Les Onze devant la Porte*

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Dorée, published in a deluxe edition in 1924, a sort of Michelangelo railroad poster. The other 1924 publication, *Histoire de la Petite 19*, has been rejected "but not denied." The *Onze*, a brief scenario, deals with Peyrony's decisions and responsibilities.

MONTHERLANT'S third group of novels, *Les Voyageurs Traqués*, is comprised of three volumes: *La Petite Infante de Castille*, *Aux Fontaines du Désir*, and *Le Voyageur Solitaire Est Un Diable* (1940). The first work is divided into two parts; the first part, written in the summer of 1927, was done before the *Aux Fontaines du Désir*, while the second part was added after the completion of the latter novel. It is therefore necessary to read the first half of the first novel, then the complete second novel, and finally the second half of the first novel in order to follow the chronological progression of Montherlant's interests and ideas. The third title was published in 1940. The series-title itself is taken from a composition in *Aux Fontaines du Désir*. This essay is dated 1926 and is prefaced with a citation from Leonardo da Vinci to the effect that force is born of constraint and dies of liberty. Montherlant describes the causes and symptoms of his nomadism and endows his feverish addiction to movement with the substance of a philosophy. Switzerland, Rome, Florence, Tunis, Algiers, Grenada, the Camargue, the Vosges; the mistral of Marseilles, the heat of Almeria, the stink of Naples; always tired and never satisfied except when momentarily leaving some place for some other place; caught in the contradictions of never remaining with the attainable and never attaining what is sufficient. It becomes somewhat too feverish, but the prose is brilliant and even violent in places. Like *La Rêve du Matin*, *Aux Fontaines du Désir* is composed of separate pieces. *La Mort de Peregrinos* develops the theme of the philosopher who "created so many diverse personalities in himself that his contemporaries nicknamed him Proteus . . . He finally destroys himself in a halocaust, body and soul, in order to regain himself for eternity." The parody is obviously directed at Barresism, and Montherlant includes three essays on Barrès: all of which caused much comment by reason of the erstwhile disciple's reversal in regard to the master of *Le Culte de Moi*. The opening essay, dedicated to and more or less concerned with Romain Rolland, contains a clear statement of what Montherlant means by "alternance": "To be simultaneously, or rather to make the Beast and the Angel alternate in one's self, to make the corporeal and carnal life alternate with the intellectual and moral life, whether man may wish it or not, nature will force him to it, this nature which is all contractions and relaxings." Montherlant finds it impossible to achieve a more complete synthesis than this neo-Baudelairean conviction; his solution is to accept "alternance" as a condition of life. *La Petite Infante de Castile*, whose two parts have already been indicated as book-

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ends for *Aux Fontaines du Désir*, is likewise in the vein of hurried and too unordered movements. The works opens with a train ride from Valencia to Barcelona, and closes with a wild and perverse dash back to France. In between, Montherlant offers a lively picture of Barcelona, the Paralelo, a dancer and her mother, the cafés and music-halls, and all the trimmings of a story about an unsure stage-door Johnny. The previous epos is lost, and it becomes apparent that Montherlant is preparing to abandon the novel.

TO RECAPITULATE, Montherlant began his literary career in the novel. His initial effort, largely confined to the spiritual experiences of youth at home and at school, was not continued in a series-effort. His next undertaking was to write a war novel, and there are prior and subsequent themes already present in this work. It is impossible to disengage the exact moment of the separate inspirations, because Montherlant passed so immediately under the influences of revolt and tradition. The first stage passed, he sought the continuance for creative sustenance in the culture of Spain and the glamour of 1924 in Paris. Like Proust, he had his method; like Barrès, he had his innovations. He drew widely on the spread of his heritage, no matter what the resultant dilemmas, and arrived at "alternance," a neo-Baudelairean bivalence in artistry and morality that could not fail to provoke. Whatever the opinion, Montherlant soon reached a point where he was acknowledged to be an active interpreter of the contemporary scene and an eager inquirer after the values of the flesh, mind, and spirit. His failure likely lies in his refusal to adhere to his primary ideas and initial concepts; at least, the public may read this way. His disconcerting system of dating, combining, and resuming his work makes for a tangle from the point of view of bibliography and the evolution of his theme-interests and idea-development. Still, these are minor matters when it is remembered that Montherlant conveys so fully the measure of his being in the first decade of his own personal venture. The earnestness of his projections would make it unjust to say that Montherlant is confined to an antithetic courtship of Nietzsche and Christ, and it is tempting to attach too much importance to Montherlant's alternate yieldings. Also, it might be thought that the cathedral of Toledo is subject to desecration, that *Aux Fontaines du Désir* contains a crucially new blasphemy, were it not for the fact that the desecration still clings to the character of its own fear. Truculence is an easy way, and this approach to Montherlant cannot account for the movement of the *Chant funèbre pour les Morts de Verdun* (1924). Whether he dedicates his attention to the pagan elements of Christianity or the Christian elements of paganism, he breathes upon his own waters, sometimes quite forcefully, but always for independent genesis and unexpected growth.

French Letter: From Paris to Vence

ALL of Paris moves out in concentric rings from its center: Notre Dame. The island of the Cité is the heart of Paris and the cathedral rests on it like a vast ship held solidly on a reef in the midst of the water. Notre Dame may not be the most beautiful cathedral of Christendom, but it is the most loved since it rests in the very heart of the most loved city. It is the church by which all other churches of Christendom are measured and judged. The first church—although there are older, like Saint Julien le Pauvre, so close by it; the best known, although it is far from being the most intimate. I have always been fearful of knowing Notre Dame, shy in its presence, even resentful of its bigness and its shower of buttresses. It faces the west and only when its façade reflects the setting sun does it glow warmly. That is the moment to look at the portal of the Virgin, on the left. There, in the coronation scene, the cathedral demonstrates its deepest meaning for me, a meaning which I can never reach inside where the awesome shadows and the miracle of the windows bewilder me. But the carved group outside, in the portal of the Virgin, that lives so closely with the elements and bears the color of the wind and rain, shows the human and the divine in such subtle alliance that I often feel no need to enter. The Mother and Son are seated. The divine ecstasy of the Son is reflected on the face of the Mother, and the human tenderness of the Mother is reflected on the face of the Son. The ecstasy of the Mother is human, and the tenderness of the Son is divine. Each is giving and receiving at the same time and they are miraculously joined in this exchange. In a way, it is the relationship between the island of the Cité and the cathedral itself. The human and the divine exist side by side, the one participating in the nature of the other, by compromise and borrowing. The Cité unites the solemnity of Notre Dame with the delicate coquetry of the Sainte Chapelle, even as the coronation group unites the benediction of the Christ with the adoration of the Virgin. The Son is extending to his Mother a scepter, but it is only a flower, and here again in the carved stone an object unites the material world and eternity. A flower from northern France for the Virgin of Israel to hold when she becomes Queen of Heaven, under the respectful gaze of the vast company in the voussiors overhead: kings of Judea and France, angels and saints and prophets.

The progression is inevitable. In a sense, it is the vocation of a race. Our Lady is crowned by her Son and reigns over her cathedral, as the cathedral dominates Paris, as Paris reigns over France. The slopes of all the

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hills of Paris lead to Notre Dame. The students from the mountain of Sainte Geneviève walk inevitably toward the Seine and the Cité and Notre Dame. Even the artists from Montmartre and Montparnasse, from the north and the south, follow the inclination of their slopes. By day I am able only to look at the details, such as the coronation of the Virgin in her portal, and, on the pillars and capitals, the carved images of the flowers and leaves of France; roses and lilies and daisies; and the more humble watercress, cabbage and plane tree leaf.

On each new return to Paris, I find myself unwilling to resume contact with the city otherwise than at the center, at the Cité itself. The façade of Notre Dame is neither romanesque nor Gothic in any pure sense. It is a measured wise Gothic, harmonious and robust at the same time. A colossal façade built by an entire people, with the variety and the eternity of that people. A return to France should begin there where its genius appears in its most limpid form, in its consecration to Our Lady. Both the history and the genius of the French are inscribed on the façade. The vagaries of weather have darkened the stone and altered the countenances of the sculptured figures. But not enough to change the gravity of the faces which still, despite the revolutions affecting the very stones of this cathedral, bear the mark of the Christian who knows himself to be a sinner and vulnerable to the world because he is vulnerable to the prince of the world. Even the faces of the Virgin and the Christ in the left portal have, combined with their holiness, the experience of pathos and of life. Only the sculptured figures of Greece might resemble gods.

THE chapel of Matisse in Vence was famous long before it was completed and consecrated. Matisse lives not far from Vence in the high residential quarter of Nice, called Cimiez, where he continues to work. The king of the wild beasts (*roi des fauves*) is immobilized most of the time in his bed, where he created the Chapelle du Rosaire of the Dominican Sisters in the hill town behind Nice. It has become one of the most visited centers on the Riviera, the opposite in size to the Gothic cathedrals of the north, the first building of its kind, every part of which was designed by one of the greatest living painters. The fact is still puzzling to many, because for a long time Matisse's anti-clerical views were well known and he is far from being today a practicing Catholic.

The precise origin of the undertaking is already somewhat legendary, but it was unquestionably concerned with the request of Sœur Jacques who nursed Matisse after a serious operation in 1947, and whom he continued to see during sojourns in Vence. The Dominican brother Rayssiguier helped in the organization of the architectural plans and Father Couturier, another Domini-

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can, posed for the fifteen foot image in black outline of St. Dominic which covers one of the walls, as well as for the head of St. Dominic over the entrance.

The site of the chapel, on a steep incline, doubtless suggested to Matisse the general conception of having a solid wall against the mountain and a wall practically of glass on the side of the valley. The choir for the nuns is placed in the left arm of the transept and the altar faces it obliquely so that the entire congregation, religious and lay, may see the celebrant at all times. Moreover, the priest at this altar, as in the primitive churches, stands behind the altar when he is celebrating mass.

The principal decorations are the windows and the ceramics. No scene is depicted on the windows. Matisse has used designs of flowers and leaves and geometrical forms in various tones of blue, green and yellow. (He used the same designs for the chasubles and mass vestments.) The light coming through these windows colors the white ceramics with their black line drawings on the opposite wall. The translucent white of these ceramics helps to create the purely spiritual atmosphere of the chapel. There is a strong contrast between the austere black lines on the ceramics and the warm sunlight streaming through the windows. But everything in art is contrast and harmony. The Matisse chapel illustrates this principle as clearly as the façade of Notre Dame. Despite his advanced age, and despite a doctor's prediction in 1947 that he would not live longer than six months, Matisse has produced a work of extreme vitality which, in its own way, is as moving a testimonial to the absolute as the Gothic cathedral. If a return visit to France in 1953 should begin with Notre Dame, it might well end with the Vence chapel.

Matisse has indicated in his will that his chapel will always be used for worship. (His communist friend Aragon once predicted to him that when the party came to power, the chapel would be converted into a museum.) Matisse understands his chapel to be the setting for a drama. No matter how admirable the setting, it needs actors and they alone count as soon as the "action" begins. He designed the entire chapel to represent an equilibrium between a surface of light and the black drawings on white ceramics which correspond to the white and black robes of the Dominicans. The chapel is a setting for their roles.

The exterior affords a further contrast in the forged iron cross which surmounts the roof. The iron of the cross weighs a ton but it gives the appearance of lightness and elegance. It preserves something of the landscape's tenderness. It rests directly on the roof without any stand. As it clings to the chapel, it bares its roots. It is a sign in the sky, above an earthbound construction. The roughness of the outside walls forms a contrast with the prim fertility of the earth and the slopes of the hills all about. Inside the

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church, there is a striking contrast between the tragic chaos of the fourteen stations of the cross drawn together on the back wall, and the serenity which comes from the luminous windows and the images of St. Dominic and the Virgin. Matisse has said that the tragic elements of his "stations" were not deliberately devised by him. He had to draw them over and over again until he felt that he himself was taking part in the drama. He has always believed that an artist never completes a major work unless he is inhabited by it. He chose white and blue for the tiles of his roof because he found that they harmonized with the gray and blue of the earth, of the olive trees and the sky. Only later did he realize that they were also the colors of the Virgin.

A lifetime's research in art is synthesized in Henri Matisse's chapel at Vence, whereas a long period of history and the belief of a race are synthesized in Notre Dame de Paris. And yet both chapel and cathedral testify to the same remarkable adaptation of a structure to its site, to its destination, to its sacred nature. The anonymous Gothic cathedral on the island of the Cité and the highly personal twentieth century chapel in the Alpes Maritimes are two ways of understanding the divine, in the agreement which both conclude between art and its religious ambition.

—WALLACE FOWLIE

The Catholic Renaissance in a Disintegrating World

Edited by NORMAN WEYAND, S.J.

The Tenth Anniversary Symposium addresses of the Catholic Renaissance Society, given at Manhattanville College, April 19-20, 1949 are now published in cloth bound book form (192 pp., \$4.00).

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Review-Articles

THE MAURIAC-COCTEAU CONTROVERSY

BY FERNAND VIAL

IF *BACCHUS*¹ is destined to hold in future years the interest of the critics, there is little doubt that the subject of their inquiry will still be the theme, or thesis, of the play. This point was brought out in an ironical review of *Bacchus* in *Le Figaro* of December 24, 1951. The author, M. Jean-Jacques Gautier accused Cocteau of not having clarified his thought, of dealing with a thousand subjects, of passing without transition from a farcical first act to a dialectical second act. His play is a guessing game, witness the variety and contradictions of opinions among the critics.

So, Cocteau has exhibited once more the baffling processes which have become identified with his manner: sophistication and witticisms, prolixity and confusion, and a facetiousness mixed with a serious intent often lacking, or at least not so evident, in his previous works. The author's direct comments, both before and after the performance, certainly do not enlighten his public; nor are they apparently destined to do so. In a box accompanying a lengthy announcement of the *première* in *Le Figaro* of December 19, 1951, Cocteau presents his play thus: "The general theme is the eternal struggle between the singular and the plural. One could use as a subtitle: 'Concerning the difficulty of being free, the difficulty of being good, or simply concerning the difficulty of being.'" Yet the preface of the published version of the play seems to ignore these previously announced themes to substitute a new one, his "harsh kindness." Again, in a note written after the performance, also appended to the published play, and taking evidently into cognizance Mauriac's condemnation of *Bacchus* in the name of Christian principles, Cocteau obscures further his two previous declarations in an attempt to elucidate. The theme is now the unrest of youth which seeks to find itself, not knowing where to head in the confusion of dogmas which seem to oppose youth's endeavor. Hans, the hero of the play, has been misled by a crisis of sensuality and has encountered failure.

AN ANALYSIS of the play reveals a subject, several themes, and even a thesis, in spite of Cocteau's denials, but these are different from those set forth by the author. The scene is laid in a small German town, near the border of Switzerland. The date is 1523, and the turmoil of the Reformation is everywhere apparent. The town is preparing to celebrate the feast of Bacchus, probably a remnant of the medieval Feast of the Fools. On this occasion, which

Note—1. *Bacchus*. By Jean Cocteau, Paris: Gallimard.

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occurs every five years, a young man is chosen as a Bacchus, to reign for a week with a despotic and absolute power over the community. In some years, the huge joke has turned into tragedy, as when a certain young man, incapable of withstanding the temptations, abused his power. Such was notably the case in the previous celebration. The Bacchus then, the Duke's son, had lorded with arrogance over his countrymen. He was obliged to pay for his temporary triumph; and was led to suicide. Christine, the daughter of the Duke, seeks at once to avenge her family and to avoid the repetition of previous excesses by preparing with feminine cunning the election of Hans, the village idiot, to the throne of Bacchus. She enlists her father, her brother, and finally Cardinal Zampi, the delegate of the Holy See, who is the guest of the local bishop. The drama is tied. Hans is elected, but a new Hans is revealed. Bold, clever, the most authoritarian and the most revolutionary of all the Bacchuses, he establishes his residence in the very castle of the Duke. He relieves the peasants from their taxes, opens the doors of the jail, and then tries to seduce Christine. At the end of the week an infuriated populace erects a pyre on the public square where Hans, deprived of his privileged status, will be burned at the stake. Cardinal Zampi seeks to save him by obtaining a spurious act of abjuration, which will put him under the protection of the Church. But Hans will have to enter a monastery never to leave it again. Christine, who has realized that she loves Hans, once his life is threatened, urges him now to accept, now to refuse the proposition of the Cardinal. Finally, Hans faces the hostile crowd, appears at the balcony of the castle, and is killed by an arrow.

In the midst of the *première*, given on December 20 at the Théâtre Marigny, by the Barrault troupe, François Mauriac left as a forceful gesture of protest. In an open letter to Cocteau, published by *Le Figaro Littéraire* of December 28, 1951, Mauriac explained the reasons which had dictated his behavior. He protested against the characters of Cardinal Zampi and of the bishop, and against the scene where the Cardinal clumsily tries to induce Hans to recite the Pater Noster. Cocteau retorted that he had no such intentions as those attributed to him by Mauriac and that he could not be blamed for the declarations of a village idiot. So, it is important to recall, to assess properly Cocteau's real or apparent purpose, and to remember that he had been converted to Catholicism by Jacques Maritain around 1926, only to renege a few years later. Thus, in view of his often stated hostility to the Church, Cocteau's views lose much of their value, the more so when one considers them in the light of a well-worn system of attacks inaugurated by Voltaire. This attitude puts in the mouths of the characters of the drama or of the novel strong arguments against the Church, tightened with an apparent forceful logic, or injurious accusations cleverly presented. And all the while the author protests that he is not at all solidary of these views. Then the so-called representatives

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of the Church, usually a Jesuit in Voltaire, here a Cardinal and a bishop, are made to answer with the weakest, and obviously ridiculous arguments, and their position quickly appears as untenable.

It is difficult not to identify Cocteau's tactics. In fact, it appears impossible, even to the most broad-minded critic, to deny that the Church is put to ridicule in this play; that its history, discipline and dogma are presented in a false light. Catholic critics, of course, will readily admit that during the temporal life of the Church, particularly the Church of the Renaissance, many abuses were perpetrated. Who denies the existence of worldly and even scandalous popes, of narrow-minded prelates, of intolerance and ignorance? But if we do not shy before these historical facts, neither must we gloat upon them. It is an untruth to isolate them, and to imply therefore that they are characteristic of the activity of the Church so as to expose the Church to the derision of the unfaithful. The question then is not whether there have been scandals in the Church, such as Cocteau depicts, but whether one may bring them to the stage without evil. While the historian has an a primary duty to present the entire truth with its lights and its shadows, the dramatic author is under no such obligation. The very choice and evolvment of his subjects may be critically construed as an indication of an attitude of hostility.

THE tableau which is constantly presented in *Bacchus* is one of intolerance on the part of the Church, of an unholy alliance with temporal powers, of the opposition of the hierarchy to progress, of cruelty and ignorance, of greed and tyranny. Nothing can be more revealing in this respect than the declarations of Cardinal Zampi, whose accidental and totally uncalled-for presence in this intrigue could be dictated to the author only by his design to give more authority to shocking pronouncements and to engage further the supreme magisterium. Says Cardinal Zampi: "The Holy Father approves very much of the masquerades in Rome, Florence, Bergamo, Venice. These masquerades prevent the people from thinking when it has fun. A person who thinks is our enemy. Such is the opinion of the Holy See." He praises the sales of indulgences which the Holy See has inaugurated "dans sa haute sagesse" so as to ease the charges of the clergy. He is strangely short-sighted in his judgments on Luther and Zwingli; he affirms that they will soon be discredited and forgotten. He regrets that although all Frenchmen are heretical in some degree, their heresy is not so pronounced that they can be burned for it. This prelate is not embarrassed by moral scruples. Sensing that Chistine has become Hans' mistress, he tries to use her influence over him to achieve his own ends. His theology is no better than his morals and quite as accommodating. In Act II, vi, one of the most dramatic scenes of the play, when the Cardinal confronts a determined and purposeful Hans, he is a rather pitiful and ridiculous

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figure. To Hans' well-knit argumentation this member of the Sacred College is incapable of answering except by trivial and commonplace explanations such as "God's designs are impenetrable," "You don't know what you are talking about," "You are an ignorant," etc. Quite evidently the most important dogmatic problem of his time was the affair of the navel: whether painters should have put a navel on motherless Adam and Eve. He praised the decision of the Holy See in this momentous matter, which was to cancel all the orders to the painters!

The other representative of the Church is the local bishop, who is a fool, fearful of only one thing, that the tithes may not continue to roll into his coffers. The bishop's enlightened position: "Pray, believe that we tolerate no more what is Greek than what is Hebraic. I am aware that a new language has been discovered which is called Greek and that the book in Greek language called the New Testament breeds heresy . . . and that it is the same for a book called the Old Testament since those who read Hebrew become Jews." Then he adds these strange words: "The Bible has been written against our faith and our priesthood."

BUT the most important character of the play is evidently Hans, the Bacchus, who, feigning idiocy, lends himself complacently to Christine's designs, and turns out to be clever, forceful, revolutionary, and a tyrant. Yet Hans is more than a social reformer; he is also and above all a rationalistic philosopher. The questions of free will, the first sin, the creation, the eternity of matter, miracles, the venality of the Church, and intolerance are presented, discussed, and adjudicated by him. He declares freely that the Church is merely temporal and institutional, that religious dogmas are nothing but legends without foundation. When one reflects that Hans is not a village idiot, but possesses, on the contrary, a solid culture—he knows more about Greek mythology than the Cardinal—that he raises a number of grave problems with an apparently forceful logic, Cocteau's attempts to evade his responsibility by asserting that he does not subscribe to the tenets of a "village idiot," are absolutely unworthy of credence. In an obvious effort to present a picture of world-wide revolt against Catholicism, Cocteau has not hesitated to accommodate history to the exigencies of his not too subtle intentions. And there are errors: the Cardinal mentions that in France Calvin is beginning to stir trouble. Calvin was born in 1509 and was therefore but fourteen years old at the time when the events described in *Bacchus* occurred (1523). He began to be known as a reformer only in 1533 when his friend Cop pronounced in the Sorbonne a speech justifying the evangelical sects; this speech had been written by Calvin. His *Institutio Religionis Christianae* appeared in 1536.

Cocteau has accused Mauriac of being narrow-minded and intolerant in his

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condemnation of *Bacchus*. On the contrary, the evidence indicates that the renegade Cocteau should be charged with a vicious attack against the Church, further aggravated by double-dealing and hypocrisy. In this instance, and in many others where moral, civic or religious values are endangered, Mauriac has again appeared fearless and uncompromising.

GIDE TODAY

By JOHN H. MEYER

ONE might without much exaggeration say of Anatole France that his reputation was buried with him and that his works, in spite of occasional half-serious endeavors to resuscitate them, remain, with a few possible exceptions, dusty mementoes of a once flourishing literary glory. An ill-natured "debunking" performance, itself soon forgotten, by a disgruntled former secretary, served as epitaph to the ex-"Grand Old Man" of French letters, the successor to whose academic *fauteuil* did not, in his *discours de réception*, condescend to recall the name of the deceased Immortal.

The reputation of Maurice Barrès fared no better: he who had so skillfully transmuted a rather wilted *culte du Moi* into chauvinistic fervors quite incomprehensible to recent generations in a state of chronic *déracinement*. After the trial of his "corpse" by the enterprising and publicity-minded Surrealists (a proceeding not without analogy to established mediaeval practices) the fame of Barrès, with whatever was left of his popularity and influence, was discreetly interred. His ghost still stalks, perhaps, not in his native Lorraine but in the chilly limbo of literary history from which, at infrequent intervals, it aspires to emerge.

To predict the eventual fate of the literary figure, work and influence of André Gide would be, no doubt, premature; yet it is evident that, two years after his death, he is more alive and discussed than most of his surviving enemies and disciples. Whatever had remained unpublished of his writings is being offered for public consumption, while books and articles about him, for and against him, issue from the presses in a swift and steady flow.¹ Nothing could have delighted him more: for the writer whose disbelief in personal immortality took on toward the end so truculent a form, what mattered above

¹"Cahier André Gide," *Prétexte*, Feb. 15, 1952.

"Hommage à André Gide," *Nouvelle Revue Française*, Nov. 1951.

The Correspondence between Gide and Claudel. Tr. John Russell. Pantheon.

André Gide and the Hound of Heaven. By Harold March. University of Pennsylvania Press.

André Gide, a Critical and Biographical Study. By George Painter. Roy Publishers.

L'Odyssée d'André Gide. By R.-M. Albérès. Paris: La Nouvelle Edition.

André Gide. By Léon Pierre-Quint. Paris: Stock.

Gide tel que je l'ai connu. By Maurice Lime. Paris: Julliard.

Conversations avec André Gide: extraits d'un journal. Paris: Albin Michel.

Notes sur André Gide, 1913-1951. By Roger Martin du Gard. Paris: Gallimard.

A la Recherche d'André Gide. By Pierre Herbart. Paris: Gallimard.

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all was the immortality of his literary personality. If Gide were able to witness his present vogue, he would surely feel that he had made a promising beginning. As yet, of course, no more than a beginning.

Unequal as they are in value and interest, most of the recent documents in the Gide *dossier* contribute something toward an understanding of the man and his persistent influence. About the secrets of his work they reveal very little, and understandably so; for Gide had long since determined to put his books to perilously extra-literary uses: they were to "testify" in behalf of the most flagrantly sincere and meticulously studied personality ever constructed by a man of letters. Writing in *Prétexte* on "l'homme sans son œuvre," M. Léon Pierre-Quint expresses the current opinion that Gide's *work* is secondary and that what really matters is, in his case, the direct and immediate action of the *man* upon men. Has the *Journal*, like some enormous and insatiable octopus, devoured Gide's "creative" work? Was M. Jacques Laurent right in suggesting in the *Table Ronde*, shortly after Gide's death, that such books as *l'Immoraliste* and *les Faux-Monnayeurs* are actually no more than lengthy passages to be inserted at proper places in the *Journal*, to which they bear a relation at least as close as that of the *Journal* to the life of Gide itself?

This absorption of the work into the writer's biography would seem at first view surprising. For, during the first thirty-five years of his literary life—his "creative" period—Gide's preoccupations had been uncompromisingly aesthetic. Morality, he had written, was merely a dependency of aesthetics; it was not with edifying sentiments that one made good literature. A work of art was the product of constraint and even of sublimated hypocrisy. As late as 1918 he continued to insist that "le point de vue esthétique est le seul où il faille se placer pour parler de mon œuvre sainement."

At the outset his literary equipment had seemed slight. His inventive capacity was limited. As "thinker" he lacked originality, power, abundance, completeness: he knew nothing of, nor was he at all interested in, for example, the domain of history or that of metaphysics. A rigidly Protestant upbringing had further constricted his field of vision. His early style was a tissue of vague, sentimental and declamatory preciosities.

What he succeeded in making of these meagre materials was exemplary. To his aesthetic insights, continually more acute, he gave form and substance by means of the instrument which he had made of his style. By an effort not often equalled he became the best prose writer of his generation. As founder and animating spirit of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* he rendered salutary service to literature by encouraging, at a time when it seemed already dissolving into platitudes of Symbolist non-being, works that, while clearly "modern," embodied authentically "classical" notions of order and form. As creative writer and creative critic, then, Gide's fame appeared secure. If he had died in

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the early 1920's, it is likely that he would have been remembered primarily as a writer and that his books would have appeared far more interesting and important than any possible record, however "sincere," of his personal idiosyncrasies.

After the middle 1920's, however, Gide's self-confidence was seriously shaken: his creative powers seemed to be ebbing away. He was uncomfortably aware of this diminution; and it is not easy for a writer who feels that, in his proper domain, he has little left to say, he must abdicate. Especially when one has learned to speak so well that, to the stalest of clichés, one is able to give a convincing semblance of the profound and the unexpected. During the last twenty-five years of his life Gide added, then, virtually nothing to his properly "creative" work. I shall not insist upon the hollowness of such productions as *l'Ecole de Femmes*, *Geneviève*, *Oedipe* and even the lavishly admired *Thésée*. But during these years the efforts of Gide (whose talent had always been primarily intuitive and subjective) were turned more and more persistently inward upon himself—upon the integrally "sincere" evocation of a "personality" put together with unbelievable patience and care.

This introspection took two forms. The first was, less paradoxically than it might seem, an increasing preoccupation with social problems. These questions had not always interested him. A performance (ca. 1900) of Hauptmann's *Weavers* had left him cold:

these people interest me only because they are hungry: if they were to stop dying of hunger, they would no longer interest me at all;—so be quite certain that they won't eat for five acts; and there we are, forced to be touched.—Dare I write that, of all ways of dying in the theatre, that "of hunger" is the least *interesting*—for, after all, when we watch that, it is usually just after dinner.

But, his creative powers gone, these problems assumed so urgent an importance in his eyes that, for the sake of oppressed and hungry humanity, he accepted for a time *in toto* the creed of the Comrades without bothering to examine it. In his *Journal sans dates* Gide had found Jules Renard's anti-clerical bigotry distasteful; but, from the day of his entry into Communism to the day of his death, his religion was that of M. Homais. Not only did he share in all its crudity the immortal druggist's belief in social and scientific "progress": he became, like M. Homais, a professional priest-baiter and proselytizer for anti-religious "certitudes."

The really significant thing about Gide's immersion in social problems was, I believe, that, like Barrès' cult of patriotism, it represented an extension of the writer's own ego (Gide's hatred for Barrès was, perhaps, one of the dominating passions of his life). A lack of sincerity on Gide's part is not to be implied, but his approach to such problems was always: "it seems to me . . ." "I feel that . . ." "I am impressed by the circumstance that . . ." In his most

authentically exalted and altruistic moments, Gide, the man of letters, never quite succeeded in transcending himself.

This introspection took also, and simultaneously, a frankly inward direction. With what care, with what voluptuous tenderness (and even in moments of extreme self-castigation), Gide scrutinized his every action, his every thought, his every impulse! "Sincere" he undoubtedly was, and even to the point of incredible insincerity and perfidy. As he continued to write his *Journal* (that all-consuming monstrous growth, almost every page of it destined for almost immediate publication), this *Journal* took on the increasingly journalistic aspect of a regular bulletin uniquely concerned with Gide's spiritual and material well-being, with his impressions of men and things insofar as they were related to himself. It became more and more difficult to distinguish the "sincere" original Gide from the studied attitudes to which, in a professionally non-conformist way, he aspired to conform. Like that of Sir Max Beerbohm's Happy Hypocrite, Gide's mask had fused with the man, become part of him. A latter-day Pygmalion, he had erected his own pedestal and poured himself into his own statue. As for his "literary" works, they had become simple accessories: *pièces justificatives* in an ambitious extra-literary dossier, at best.

IT IS understandable that, two years after Gide's death, it is the man and not the work that receives, from enemies and friends alike, the major share of attention. The founding of *Prétext* ("cahier André Gide" . . . "fruit de notre ferveur") is admittedly a ritual gesture, the sort of gesture that one had anticipated. A few established names have been scattered throughout the table of contents to lend some ballast and appropriate seriousness to the fervors of the very young from whom the initiative and most of the contributions are derived. There is, of course, perpetual emphasis upon *l'humain* (twenty years ago it would have been upon *l'inquiétude*, for, after all, literary "intimistic" fashions *do* admit of minor variations). One of the young contributors has even expressed himself somewhat bateau-ivresquely in rhyme. There is, one should note, a single dissenting voice.

The "Homage" of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* is a more elaborate and sophisticated enterprise. It was fitting that the magazine to which most of the important French writers still living owe so much, and which had paid mortuary homage to so many writers of such varied merits, should be resuscitated one last time in voluminous and merited tribute to its founder and, for so many years, its guiding spirit. The first section, "Homage de l'Etranger," contains the expected floral wreaths from a number of big names and some smaller ones: their character is semi-official; this is, perhaps, the least interesting part of the book. Although the second section is entitled "Gide dans les lettres," the emphasis in it, as throughout, is upon the man (and the man of

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letters) rather than upon the work. The third section, "André Gide tel que je l'ai vu," is frankly anecdotic: these articles are, perhaps, the best of the lot. Roger Martin du Gard's "Notes sur André Gide," first published here, have since been reprinted in a plaquette of which, presently, I shall have more to say. The account by his son-in-law, Jean Lambert, of Gide's last illness and death, is extremely moving. All of these recollections *do* add something to our picture of the man: the most surprising of them is, perhaps, Richard Heyd's account of an April Fool joke successfully perpetrated upon the aged Master, himself an amateur of that sort of thing. Gide received a letter supposedly written by Claudel's confessor: his elaborate and dramatic preparations for the expected visit of the imaginary P. Lafario were, of course, wasted. So was an important amount of potential "intimate" copy: this episode has not, so far as I know, found its way into the *Journal*. The concluding section of the volume (more than four hundred pages in all) contains texts by Gide himself: fragments of early correspondence with Paul Valéry and Marcel Drouin, a brief preface to *la Symphonie pastorale*, extracts from the posthumously published *Et nunc manet in te* and *Ainsi soit-il*. There are, finally, photographs and drawings of Gide in extreme old age and on his death-bed. A collection of *témoignages* put together with the skill to be expected of Jean Paulhan.

Prof. March, Mr. Painter and M. Albérès accept almost at par the Gide legend: by way of interpretation they add little that is new or notable. Prof. March's title, adapted from Francis Thompson, indicates an emphasis upon the religious problem which, in the case of Gide, I find misleading. I am not convinced that, for him, the religious problem was the central problem. With the Jansenism of *la Porte étroite* and the effusions of *Numquid et tu?* readers of Gide are, of course, familiar. He admits that, had he so elected, he could have gone on exhaling *élans mystiques* indefinitely: "Je tiens la recette." And it is true that, long after all religious belief had evaporated, Gide continued to make use of Christian terminology. But "Dieu" and "le diable" mean one thing to the Christian; to Gide, something quite different. Taken in their entirety, the writings of Gide are, I think, much more secularized in spirit than they seem to be. And I believe that to few men who have talked so much about religion has religion really mattered so little. Gide's concentration upon the workings of his own *Moi*—his unwearying efforts to photograph every accessible corner of his own inner landscape—rendered any effort to transcend that *Moi* impossible.

FOR an understanding of the religious problem as it presented itself to Gide, his correspondence with Claudel (already discussed in *Renascence* and now offered to American readers in a felicitous translation by John Russell) is a document of capital importance. His failure to convert Gide was one of

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the severest disappointments of the Catholic poet's life; but was he not much luckier than he could have imagined—far luckier than Maritain, who *did* convert such people as Jean Cocteau and Maurice Sachs? For is it not almost certain that (as happened in his entry into and apostasy from Communism) a "conversion" of Gide to Catholicism would have been followed necessarily by a swift and scandalous de-conversion?

Mr. Painter's book is an exuberant and intelligent, if somewhat uncritical record of an excursion to the land of Gide and what he saw there. He knows the territory: his is the usual emphasis upon the writer's biography; and his conclusions are, from a Gidean viewpoint, acceptably orthodox. His interpretations seem at times carried a bit further than available evidence would warrant. Thus he states, for example, that "in 1922 Mme. Gide was distressed by 'what seems to her a lamentable catastrophe'—the birth of Gide's daughter. From about this period till 1929 ensued an estrangement, caused partly, no doubt, by the above events." But was Mme. Gide aware of the actual paternity of the child? She seems never to have mentioned the topic; and both Martin du Gard and Gide himself profess entire ignorance of how much the unfortunate Emmanuèle may have known or suspected. Mr. Painter's is one of the most readable books on Gide at present available in English: an entertaining introduction to the subject.

The somewhat pretentious essay of M. Albérès suffers, on the other hand, from sheer dullness. There is copious repetition of officially Gidean clichés ("la sincérité," "la joie," "l'humain," etc.) This effort is also, and emphatically, a "fruit de la ferveur." The first sentence informs us that "l'affaire de Gide a été de remplacer une morale par une exigence." It sounds impressive, but what does it mean? For an answer I refer you to pp. 26-27, where M. Albérès sums up this *morale*:

Moralist [in the French sense of the term], Gide has imparted in *Thésée* the final word of his wisdom: the moral life has nothing to do with obedience, acceptance, nor their contrary, subversion; it is not a doctrine, nor a thought; it consists above all in remaining unsubmitted and unsatisfied: capable of progress and enlargement, like the son of Theseus.

And so forth. He cites in conclusion the final words of *Thésée*:

I have tasted the good things of the earth. It gratifies me to think that, after me, thanks to me, men will realize that they are happier, better, freer. For the good of future humanity, I have done my work. I have lived.

In such a scheme, humility is not imaginable.

M. Pierre-Quint's book is an augmented edition of a study which, upon its original appearance (1933), intelligent and well-documented as it was, disappointed: a rather mechanical and uninspired performance. Twenty years

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ago, of course, the career of Gide represented, for a liberal gliding leftward (as did, for example, the late F. O. Matthiessen), a very neat and symmetrical design: André Gide, or From Mere Literature to Social Action. One feels that M. Pierre-Quint has never quite forgiven Gide for disappointing the hopes of his ex-comrades, all the more so since, as already mentioned, he explicitly believes that Gide's importance *as a writer* is strictly secondary and that what matters are the *man* and the direct and immediate action of that man upon men. The new materials included in the present edition—the "Entretiens avec Gide et ses contemporains"—are important. The book is much more interesting than it was twenty years ago: a valuable and useful document.

The intention of Maurice Lime (a pseudonym), in his *Gide tel que je l'ai connu*, was clearly, like that of "Victor" (another pseudonym), to "debunk" the legend of an accredited Great Man to whose charm Comrade Lime's own inherent lack of finesse had rendered him so fortunately immune. Former Communist and later Doriotist, Comrade Lime seems almost too typical to be convincing: one would swear that he had been invented by Jean-Paul Sartre for utilization in the *Chemins de la liberté*. At the time of his introduction to the freshly converted Gide, Comrade Lime was the most militant of militants. Secure in his impregnable ignorance and aggressive class-consciousness, Comrade Lime resolved to undertake the political education of this strange bourgeois animal. Dialectical materialism, of course: the entire set of Marxist dogmas. But, first of all, a lesson in manners. We can believe the comrade when he tells us that: "J'apportais avec moi l'odeur de la rude fraternité de nos réunions de militants. D'emblée, je l'ai tutoyé. Cela lui a plu." But Gide had determined, almost simultaneously, to attempt the literary and sentimental education of his quite unliterary and unsentimental "teacher," for whom a reading of the *Nouvelles Nourritures* proved to be indeed a disillusioning experience. The account of their mutual misconceptions and misadventures is a readable document: broad farce with, at times, overtones of pathos.

THE books by Claude Mauriac, Roger Martin du Gard and Pierre Herbart are the most interesting and, I believe, the most important of the lot. The younger Mauriac's acquaintance with Gide, some fifty-odd years older than himself, began shortly after the Russian fiasco. Here (even omitting all corydonesque considerations) was surely an ideal disciple: young, observant, enthusiastic, tactful; with exalted literary and social connections; author already not only of a book on Marcel Jouhandeau but of an uninterrupted *journal intime*, and thoroughly versed in the neo-preciosity of intimist vocabulary and sentiments. Claude Mauriac was convinced that, after his disappointment in Cocteau, he had finally discovered the ideal friend and spiritual guide; and he aspired above all to effect a *rapprochement* between André Gide and François Mauriac. The elder Mauriac remained a trifle ironic and skeptical, but proved,

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of course, a charming host when the anticipated visit of Gide to Malagar, at the Mauriac country home, finally did take place in the spring of 1939. The friendship reached, perhaps, its peak at this point. It cooled somewhat as a consequence of a *décade* at Pontigny in the summer of the same year, a *décade* amusingly described by Claude Mauriac. During the course of it the Master revealed himself as, at times, uncomfortably satanic. There were occasional letters during the years 1939-1945 but, when relations were re-established after the war, no further real intimacy. Neither mentor nor disciple had quite fulfilled expectations. Yet Claude Mauriac's ultimate appreciation of Gide is admiring and affectionate.

Although Roger Martin du Gard first met Gide as early as 1913 (a meeting of which, in the present book, he offers an entertaining account), it was not until six years later that the two writers achieved real intimacy. From that time on until the end of Gide's life, Martin du Gard remained perhaps his closest friend. Of divergent temperaments and talents, they discussed with virtually total frankness their books, their literary and personal problems: they kept, it would seem, no secrets from one another. Gide came to value Martin du Gard's honesty and to rely heavily upon his sound advice. As for the younger man, so greatly did he admire Gide, and so thoroughly was he permeated with the cult of sincerity, that, in narrating his memories of his dead friend, he would have felt, had he kept back any of the truth as he saw it, unworthy of himself and of Gide. He had, moreover, he assures us, shown to Gide at one time or another all the notes of which his book is composed. Gide had approved them.

But the sketch of Gide which emerges from this little book is not, however one views it, a flattering likeness. The Master's increasing absorption in the most minute details of whatever concerned himself and his almost total indifference to those around him except insofar as, in some way, they might be of use to him; his absence of scruple in "unimportant" matters; his untiring indiscretion; his strange lack of remorse at the time of his wife's death (one recalls his still stranger "rectification" of this omission)—these and other traits carefully noted by Martin du Gard compose a Gide perhaps more "human" than sympathetic. The appreciation of Gide's personality on pp. 127-129 takes on—coming as it does from so close a friend—a rather terrifying clairvoyance. At no time, however, is Martin du Gard's admiration seriously shaken; and he concludes that "il faut lui savoir un gré infini d'avoir su mourir si bien."

The case of Pierre Herbart is different: a younger man, in a somewhat more complicated relationship to the Master (husband of Elisabeth Van Rysselberghe and stepfather, therefore, to Gide's daughter). We may be certain that he shared the general admiration for Gide's talents and that he participated fully in the cult of absolute sincerity. But in this book (dedicated to Martin

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du Gard) we have the impression of a man decidedly "fed up." "About Gide," he warns us, "I must say all that I think—or nothing." He did not disappoint the shade of Gide by saying nothing.

If this book had been written by one of Gide's known enemies—by Henri Massis, say—it would have been dismissed as extraordinarily cruel and slanderous. For the image of Gide designed in these pages is not merely unflattering: it is, to put it mildly, devastating. In the name of sincerity the Master is subjected therein to a castigation the like of which might have caused even an André Gide some slight *frémissement*. If we accept the rules of the game—utter sincerity—we have no right to disregard a *témoignage* from such a source.

"Mon affection pour Gide," Herbart truthfully tells us, "était sans complaisance." He insists, like Martin du Gard, upon Gide's meticulous "arrangement" of his personality. The key to that personality was, he feels, not pride, not coquetry, not egoism (with all of which qualities Gide was, of course, copiously endowed) but "*la peur de décevoir et d'être déçu, la peur d'être le déçu-décevant*." This fear would account for, among other things, Gide's desire to please at all costs, his political frivolity and lack of intellectual rigor ("il 'pense' par procuration"), his taste for "des aventures sans lendemains et des voluptés bâclées," his brusque indifference toward those who had disappointed him or whom he had disappointed.

He likewise insists upon Gide's "lack of virility" (i.e., lack of any real sense of responsibility). Such a deficiency would account for Gide's famous dissociation of the heart and the senses, his curious ideas on marriage, his untrustworthiness. His amorality would result simply from an absolute incapacity to comprehend the most elementary notions of morality ("dans ce domaine il vivait d'emprunts"). Herbart further stresses his curious lack of delicacy in certain matters ("il n'avait aucune notion des incompatibilités"), his displays of excessive and unwarranted emotion ("il voit dans les larmes la garantie de l'authenticité de son émotion"), his callousness (Herbart agrees that "il n'était jamais si malheureux que ça").

Nor is that all. From his egoism stem a total insensibility toward the rights of other people, a certain cowardice (and even downright cruelty), a real spiritual poverty and avarice. Gide, Herbart feels, would have been incapable of committing an *acte gratuit*: there was nothing gratuitous about him. He had undeniably—and not only in the domain of sensuality—a taste for the sordid ("son goût du sordide serait en quelque sorte le luxe de Gide"). In friendship he was indiscriminating and—save for rare exceptions—unstable (Martin du Gard noted that, from time to time, Gide "revised his treaties of alliances").

What, after all that, remains for Pierre Herbart of Gide's "greatness"? It

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would seem evident that he was attracted and subjugated by a charm difficult to define and by an admiration which he sums up thus:

He had all that it takes to end in sterility and despair. His exceptional achievement was to elude them by clinging so tightly to the goal he had set himself: his work—that he can no longer be severed from it. And he drew from this end the force to complete himself in order to accomplish it.

From the mass of documents which we have been considering, is it possible to draw any valid general conclusions? They might be, perhaps, premature: the evidence is not all in yet. And, properly qualified, they would occupy more space than remains at the end of a review-article. An adequate *jugement d'ensemble* is still to be attempted.

THE IMAGE, THE SYMBOL AND THE MEANING:

Medieval Symbolism in our Times

By R. J. SCHOECK

GERTRUDE STEIN'S "A rose is a rose is a rose" could only have been said by an American in the twentieth century, living in what William Carlos Williams calls a physical world, and as a writer using words to achieve the sharp and definite precision of a photograph of that world. And the words themselves are deliberately chosen and made to be as free as possible from symbolic associations—at a fairly low level of intensity there is Dr. Williams' red wheelbarrow, and at a rather more delicate and complex level of sensibility there is Marianne Moore's refined description of "Camellia Sabina:"

Gloria mundi

with a leaf two inches, nine lines

broad, they have; and the smaller,

Camellia Sabina

with amanita-white petals; there are several of her

pale pinwheels, and pale

stripe that looks as if on a mushroom the

sliver from a beet-root carved into a rose were laid.

Much of the imagery of the more competent American verse of the past quarter-century has been of this kind: a precisionistic imagizing of the material of the physical world. This way of looking at things (I do not call it realism) has made our vision sharper and more precise, but it has also limited our

1. This article is occasioned by the publication of *Secular Lyrics of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, edited by Russell Hope Robbins (Oxford University Press, 1952). The scope and nature of his collection is set forth in the Preface: "I have tried to include poems which would illustrate, irrespective of poetic merit, all the various types of Middle English secular lyrics; all lyrics outstanding either for their literary value or for the tendencies they represent, even if they have been previously printed; the lyrics most current in Middle English . . . irrespective of their appeal as literature to the modern reader; and, finally, a few lyrics by known authors (except Chaucer), so as to permit a comparative survey in the compass of one volume." One can only applaud the careful scholarship of this volume, and hope that all teachers of medieval poetry and readers of English poetry will read and use this collection.

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cosmography to the universe of the physical, the merely sensible world, and it has largely lost any sense of the past, any awareness of the inheritance of man from the past—it is of course in turn the effect of a loss of the central Christian tradition. To paraphrase a comment of A. L. Browse, every poet must carry at heart an image and a dream, and (somewhat to transform the figure) to have only the image is to be a Williams kind of poet, to have only the dream is to be a late Romantic—with all the kinds of successful experiment and even achievement possible to each concentration, but also with all the limitations when each is carried to excess and to the exclusion of the other.

Let us turn to a Middle English poem to see something of the richer total awareness of the medieval man who saw at all times the visible world—as Chaucer did, clearly and freshly—but a visible world pierced everywhere by an invisible: hence the sense of order and degree, of a system of corresponding planes, that we find in the tradition from medieval poetry through Shakespeare (most conspicuously in the famous Ulysses' "order" speech in *Troilus and Cressida*) and many minor poets like Sir John Davies, in his *Orchestra*. The following is a poem of about 1500 which occurs in the same manuscript as the famous

Gode sire, pray ich thee,
for of saynte charite,
come and daunce wyt me
In irlaunde

(perhaps better known in the Yeats poem drawn from it); this is a lyric that has generally been classified, though erroneously, as a love lyric and usually called "Maiden of the Moor:"

Maiden in the mor lay—
in the mor lay—
sevenyst fulle, sevenist fulle.
Maiden in the mor lay—
in the mor lay—
sevenistes fulle and a day.

Welle was hire mete.
wat was hire mete?
the primerole and the—
Welle was hire mete.
Wat was hire mete?
the primerole and the violet.

Welle was hire dryng.
wat was hire dryng?
the chelde water of the—
the chelde water of the—
Welle was hire dryng.
Wat was hire dryng?
the chelde water of the welle-spring.

Welle was hire bour.
wat was hire bour?
the rede rose and the—
the rede rose and the—
Welle was hire bour.
Wat was hire bour?
the rede rose an the lilie flour.

As a piece of imagistic writing it is completely self-contained, a precise and clearly-cut image of a maiden on the moor—perhaps, one might think, a young

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girl in her funeral bower, though a practical mind might wonder why on the moor, and how the flowers got there, and why seven nights. But it is also in the tradition of scriptural symbol, familiar to the medieval man in a dozen ways—through sermons and homiletic interpretations of Scripture, through the symbolic world in which he lived: heraldry and livery, church architecture and liturgical symbols—and, if he were learned, through the vast wealth of Scriptural commentary, of the *glossa ordinaria*, the writings of Saint Augustine, Bede, Rabanus Maurus, Saint Bernard, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, and many others, on into the Renaissance (for the heritage of Christian symbol was preserved as a living tradition well into the seventeenth century, and in literature and art did not altogether die then). In the light of this tradition, the multiple meanings of the poem come to light, the visible world makes room for the richer meanings of the invisible. Here we have the "good garden:" the rose was a flower of martyrdom, and the combination of lilies and roses "was used to show martyrdom and purity, Charity and innocence, or related ideas." That the drink of the maiden was the "chelde water of the welle-spring" indicates *Christus irrigans* or the Holy Spirit, or true doctrine, or baptism. And the "sevenist fulle" would be the seven sacraments. At the doctrinal level, then, the poem's *sentence* or doctrinal significance may be seen as an imaginative treatment of certain aspects or phases of the religious life, though there is of course no need to insist upon an interpretation at only one level and no reason to reject or exclude the loveliness of the language of the poem, for the medieval mind would have encompassed the several levels simultaneously, much as our ears can hear four-part harmony: now listening to the melody or the harmony, now hearing all four together. (In a review of *Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition*, appearing recently in *Thought*, I have contrasted my treatment of the poem—which originally appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement*, June 8, 1951—with that of Professor Robertson in *English Institute Essays 1950*: the one interpretation, that just given, emphasizing the tropological; the other emphasizing the allegorical; each is only a partial view, and doubtless the medieval mind would have encompassed both simultaneously.)

IT IS this many-leveled, many storied structure of signification that gives the richness of complex meanings and harmonic effect to Dante, to Chaucer, to the curiously neglected *Piers the Plowman*—but never, one must insist, at the loss of the literal: never is the literal sacrificed to the allegorical (in medieval poetry at its best, though it is in such derivative and decadent pieces as Stephen Hawes' *Pastime of Pleasure*); never is the music of the physical, visible world lost. And in this light the *lais* of Marie de France, the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, which so often have been considered naive by moderns, reveal a depth of significance and a structure of meaning not seen before. To

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illustrate this, let us approach some examples through the device of the typical medieval literary garden.

An Old Irish poem, *Saltair na Rann*, contains a richly detailed picture of the "good garden"—this verse paraphrase of Scripture describes first the Tree of Life, showering the Water of Life in the form of dew:

There flock bright birds, a shining throng,
And sing their grace-perfected song
While boundless mercy round them weaves
Undying fruit, unfading leaves

(from the translation of Robin Flower)

Or the medieval poet might present the "evil garden," with its superficial attraction, as in the Old English "Doomsday" (based on the *De die iudicii* attributed to Bede); the poem expresses

. . . the speaker's fears concerning his state of sin and the coming of Doomsday, when the world and its garden will be no more . . . the wood is 'helme bebeht,' indicating that the speaker is hiding from the sun of God's justice. He sits 'holte tomiddes,' in *medio ligni*. Beneath the trees in this 'gehaege' bloom the flowers of the flesh watered by the streams of worldly wisdom.

But a storm arises, and, continuing Professor Robertson's commentary:

That is, the wood where Adam and Eve sought protection, even though its flowers and rippling streams may seem attractive, will soon pass in the storm of God's wrath. In spite of the flowers and murmuring streams, the speaker is not altogether comfortable.

And we have of course the much better known example of a more famous medieval poet who "also found himself uneasy in this grove:"

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
che la diritta via era smarrita.

What is important in these various employments of the garden in medieval literature (and there is a continuous tradition in the vernacular literatures, from *Beowulf* and Chrétien to January's garden in Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*) is that

. . . the various elements connected with the two gardens may be combined in a variety of ways to suit the needs of a given poet or audience, and that other materials, like frost [a traditional symbol of Satan: the chill of cupidity] or dew [God's mercy], may be associated with them Throughout . . . there runs an implicit contrast between human cupidity and the ideal of Charity, and in all of them the intention is to make Charity understandable and desirable.

For when Christ is the gardener, then the garden (any individual, any society of men) is "ruled by wisdom and suffused with the warmth of Charity. Otherwise it is ruled by worldly wisdom or *scientia* and suffused with cupidity."

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(See D. W. Robertson, "The Doctrine of Charity in Mediaeval Literary Gardens," *Speculum* XXVI [January, 1951], 24-29, which presents a wealth of illustration and documentation, and from which I have quoted; for a similar approach to Chaucer see Father Beichner's "Absalom's Hair" in *Mediaeval Studies* XII [1950], 222-33.) To the medieval mind, all creation was an expression of God's infinite love, and the techniques of reading the Bible were applied in the later Middle Ages not only to sacred but also to profane letters and to the Book of God's Work; and since all creation was thought meaningful, the medieval reader and poet sought to find beneath the shell of external meaning the kernel of wisdom, the ultimate truth and the only true source of beauty.

If I have won conviction that something has been lost, how do we go about regaining or rediscovering this world of meaning? It is, first of all, more than a cult or a literary convention: to be viable and meaningful today it must be a habit of mind; it must be reborn. To develop this habit of mind among Christian readers today will take first the widening influence of critics and scholars who are rediscovering the medieval mind: we are only now finishing the painfully slow spade-work of establishing texts and providing the linguistic and textual materials necessary for further understanding; and the second stage of applying to literature and the other arts the critical scholarship of such learned men as Don Wilmart, Père Daniélou, Chenu, Ghellinck, Glorieux, Gilson, Paré, Lottin, Smalley and a host of others is now sufficiently advanced that historical critics have begun to reexamine works of art in the light of their findings. This stage has seen the notable work of Professors Robertson and Huppé on *Piers Plowman* in the light of Scriptural tradition, and the perceptive studies of Professor Robertson of the medieval literary garden and Chaucer's kind and sense of tragedy. There are others, of course, but the field is anything but crowded, and much further work is needed throughout medieval studies.

THEN all of this must be passed on to the teachers, so that all medieval literature (and not just Dante), as well as much early Renaissance literature, is taught as a viable thing and not just as literary history, although there is always a place for that. And finally there must be a growing body of mature adults who read their Chaucer and Dante and other medieval poets and prose writers intelligently and pleasurably—for in literature, as T. S. Eliot said (in his W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture), the end of scholarship is understanding, and the end of understanding is enjoyment. Then perhaps we shall be ready for poets who will be able to write with a sense of tradition for a living audience. And then we shall be able to look back upon the now-familiar attempts of Eliot to create this kind of audience by a boot-strap effort, and to see how

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shallow and artificial are the roses and gardens of his early Christian poetry. And we shall then see how unsatisfying is the work of such earnest poets as Edwin Muir (I quote a poem which Kathleen Raine offered in a not dissimilar discussion):

There is a road that turning always
Cuts off the country of Again
Archers stand there on every side
And as it runs time's deer is slain
And lies where it has lain.

It is precisely the abstract quality of Muir's handling of symbolic language that makes the poem thin and unsatisfying; there is no sense of tradition, and there can be little participation by an audience in this kind of reference. Claudel's immediately evocative and widely understandable *Satin Slipper* is, I think, more nearly in the right direction, and so is the less immediately communicated synthesis of the symbolic and the contemporary in Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Philosophers might point out that the aesthetic of the inner form by which the medieval poet operated was substantially Platonic—as indeed one might easily demonstrate, building on the work of Peter Wust and E. I. Watkin—but that does not belong in this discussion. On the other hand, one must meet the expected question of the cultural historian: do you expect the Christian artist of today to restore the dead forms of an earlier culture? By no means. I do not suggest that the contemporary poet restrict himself to copying and repeating old forms and dead symbolisms; I do insist that the great poet must have the stimulus of a preceding cultural tradition and that from this starting point he may and must move on (in Watkin's words) "to discover new expressions, new forms significant of a truth which, though unchanging, is inexhaustibly rich in its content and displays new aspects under novel conditions of vision." For poets today I know of no richer tradition, no more exciting stimulus because of the significance of its aesthetic intuition, than the symbolism of medieval and early renaissance poetry.

WALT WHITMAN'S dictum that for there to be great poets there must be great audiences has been widely quoted (and perhaps widely misunderstood), but we must recognize the essential validity of his statement. It is not likely that we shall ever have a great Christian poet in our times until we have available for that poet when he appears a great Christian audience, and what I have been suggesting is that this audience must be aware of its Christian tradition, and that this tradition is not only most readily approachable through symbols and rituals but indeed only transmittable and capable of being maintained dynamically by means of and in its symbols and rituals. To produce that audience we must first have the scholars to discover, the critics

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to apply, all that the New Criticism has taught us about the nature and function of symbols in literature—but we must recognize at the outset that to make the critical sensibility more aware of complexity and paradox is not the same as to enrich the full sensibility of the human being. Sister M. Cleophas' sensitive interpretation of levels of meaning in Eliot's "Four Quartets" (in the Spring 1950 issue of *Renaissance*) is a notable example of this kind of work, and also of some importance are P. J. Scharper's "Symbolism in the New Criticism" (*America*, February 2, 1952) and Kathleen Raine's brief but perceptive "The Symbol and the Rose" in *The New York Times Book Review*; I have found both Mr. Scharper and Miss Raine heuristic and useful. But more significant is the essay of Père Daniélou, "The Problem of Symbolism" (in September 1950 *Thought*). We ought also to know better and more widely the notable collection of studies of various aspects of symbolism, *La Maison-Dieu* 22, which contains among others an article by R. Pernoud that is "a most powerful indictment of the modern neglect of the symbol and a grave warning of the danger to religion of an exclusively abstract way of thinking and teaching." This essay emphasizes the dynamic quality of the symbol as opposed to the essentially static quality of purely rational knowledge.

Perhaps the recognition of the importance of symbols in enriching the full sensibility of man is what Newman meant by the poetry of Catholic life is his essay *On Idealism and Originality in Literature*:

With Christians, a poetical view of things is a duty—we are bid to color all things with hues of faith, to see a divine meaning in every event, and a superhuman tendency. Even our friends around are invested with unearthly brightness—no longer imperfect men, but beings taken into divine favor, stamped with His zeal, and in training for future happiness.

We may well be both ashamed and grateful (as Mr. Scharper has remarked) when we hear one of the New Critics, William Troy, call for "a thorough-going refurbishment of the medieval fourfold method of interpretation"—literal, allegorical, tropological and anagogical (such as I have tried to suggest in my illustrations above). We must all begin with this kind of literary spiritual exercise in our own reading of Christian poets: there is abundant material not only in Chaucer and Dante (which we must read at deeper levels than we were generally taught at school) and the much-neglected *Piers Plowman*, but also in the many religious and secular lyrics of the Middle Ages. We now have Professor Robbins' fine collection to add to those of Carleton Brown.

The great Christian poetry of our own times may then perhaps follow.

Book Reviews

Die Affen Gottes. By Walter von Molo.
Berlin: Eric Schmid.

When three former classmates, a poet, "who is allowed to live by his fellowmen," a craftsman, who leads his life for the sake of his work and family, and a businessman, whose very existence is homage to mammon and the body, stage a deliberate reunion, speculations are bound to run high—or die a miserable death. In this case, clashes between idealism, traditionalism, and stark realism soon assume such proportions as to grow frail and faint in the light of the weighty issues of the day whose sun might well shine over postwar Germany or our own country. Neither soul has remained unaffected by the atomic age, the Red Peril, and all its implications. The ring of slogans tossed about by a group of revelers, uninhibited in their prurient emotions and desires, is heard on ruthless, rich Goldrauter's pleasure boat, while others long for the peace of death. "Love of oneself and the other sex will insure one's inability to be mindful of life's problems, for thinking is dangerous to enjoyment that knows no responsibility." But the end to such sinful thoughts and actions appears to be at hand when the ceaseless rains threaten to bring about another deluge. The creatures of hypocrisy and corruption, of pride and smugness, greed and selfishness, adultery and fornication, victims of warped ideologies, flee the unsafe shores to take with them and preserve their standards of good and evil if and when Goldrauter's arc should touch ground again. God is left behind with hardly a word of mention. The admonishing voice of the poet Koenig, uncertain of himself as he staggers under attractive temptations, brings only passing relief from land. When the rainfall eventually stops—against the reader's hopes—to permit the return to earth of the motley passengers, the last hope for a catharsis is stifled by the unregenerate behaviour of this

petty humanity that would not wish to be saved in the face of another imminent cataclysm. But God stands aside and waits.

Thus, the already controversial figure of the aging author has ventured forth once again into the glare of the limelight he at one time enjoyed as the President of the German Academy of Fine Arts. But in its reflection can be observed his failure to rise to greater heights since leaving his familiar surroundings of historical figures such as Luther, Frederick the Great, Schiller, Friedrich List, and others. His move into the present, with an uncertain, trembling glance into the future of a shaken but not wiser world has been sufficiently bold almost to upset his aim completely. Aside from the absence of a definite positive message the reader would like to see himself braced but he is dropped into a near-vacuum—which Molo, in despair, must have offered to share with a limited public—as, in view of this self-created iconoclasm, he turns violent cynic. This piece of gouache, under his jerky, restless brush, makes the outlines of his ill-drawn characters appear even more blurred amidst the numerous empty or illogical mumblings of an earthy philosophy, and the many artless descriptions that only help to detract. With one last stroke of disgust with both matter and form he curses his work with the challenging title of "Apes of God," a misnomer indeed, for who, among this strange gathering of unstable humans, whose ghoulishness virtually eclipses everything else, would create an impression lasting enough to call himself an imitator of God, except possibly the simple craftsman Werkauf? Yet even he has grown pale and unconvincing, despite his profound faith, in this maze of doomed attempts.

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The Symbolist Movement. By Kenneth Cornell. Yale University Press. \$3.00.

Baudelaire. By P. Mansell Jones. Yale University Press. \$2.50.

Paul Valéry: The Mind in the Mirror. By Elizabeth Sewell. Yale University Press. \$2.50.

Contemporary French Poetry. By Joseph Chiari. Philosophical Library. \$3.75.

Entretiens Exemplaires. By Marcel Castay. Paris: Librairie les Lettres.

Gravity and Grace. By Simone Weil. With an Introduction by Gustave Thibon. Tr. Arthur Wills. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$3.50.

The painstaking rediscovery and perusal of fifty-five literary periodicals (e.g., *Lutèce*, *Le Décadent*, *La Vogue*, *La Cravache*), anthologies, first editions and parodies in order to reconstruct a year by year report of the history of French symbolism from 1870-1900 is a work which certainly deserves praise. But since such a presentation, despite all the penmanship displayed, is almost unreadable, the question arises whether such enterprises should not be presented rather in the form of tabulations and literary dictionaries or whether they should be postponed until the analysis of sufficient single symbolistic works will have offered enough substantiated criticism to combine the exterior historical sketch with an interior evaluation. Literary history and criticism appear constantly at odds in this attempt of Mr. Cornell (e.g., the *rap-prochement* between Des Esseintes and Hérodiade). The author is interested in the demonstration that our selective symbolist criticism of today with the shift to pure poetry is at the end of a development which certainly could not be predicted during and immediately after the creative years of symbolism when Paul Bourget and Rollinat were symbolists. At that time other entirely forgotten writers (Signoret, Louis Siefert, Marie Kryszynska) were surrounding Baudelaire and Verlaine, considered as the giants, while Rimbaud and Mallarmé were obscured by the *Ecole romane*, by the extension of the *Félibrige* and *Néo-parnas-*

siens, *Wagnérisme*, *Verslibrisme* and the pseudo-mystic Belgian wing of the movement, culminating in Verhaeren's poetry and Maeterlinck's drama. The first influences of the movement on Stefan George in Germany, Hugo von Hoffmannsthal in Austria, Eugenio de Castro in Portugal, Valeri Bryusov in Russia, Arthur Symons in England were something exceptional. The same holds true for this country where the influence of the lesser stars is stressed, like that of Tailhade and Corbière on Ezra Pound and that of Laforgue on T. S. Eliot.

Mansell Jones' very competent study mainly sketches the life and work of Baudelaire as a *poète engagé* though "pure," and tries then a new "architecture" of the *Flowers of Evil*. In this latter attempt Mansell Jones follows closely Crépet's grouping of the poems around Baudelaire's mulatto mistress, Jeanne Duval, Mme. Sabatier (the white cycle), and the actress Marie Daubrun (the cycle of the lady with the green eyes), to which the minor groups are added. The critical remarks are often to the point, sometimes refined, sometimes sophisticated. The evaluating allusions to Baudelaire-literature, buttressed by a bibliographical appendix, reveal selective taste and sure judgment on the part of the interpreter. But the reader must know too much about the poems to be able to use this elegant condensation as an introduction. P. Mansell Jones' discussion with Father Jean Massin proves his own strong entanglement in the "art pour l'art" attitude, since he tries, on the track of T. S. Eliot, to deny the poet's obligations in life outside his poetry which is his exclusive task, his testing ground, his supernatural gift. Fortunately, our critic is not too consistent when he comes to the single interpretations and gives us one of the soundest judgments balancing the profligate poet's vortex of depravity and "ineradicable morbidity" with his poetical grandeur and nobility, due to his extraordinary sense of guilt. This does not mean, however, the solution of the

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problem of Baudelaire, since "no one is likely to succeed, in summing up Baudelaire." But this newest Baudelaire critic has defined at least negatively the most important angle: "In any interpretation of society and the universe which is not related to Catholic assumptions he [Baudelaire] shows no kind of interest." P. Mansell Jones, furthermore, has circumscribed the essence of Baudelaire's prototype of *poésie pure* as "his unique and perilous wager to extract beauty from evil."

Elizabeth Sewell's volume is the fifth of the new series, "Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought." It offers an interpretation of Valéry's complicated network of thought and "speculation" in the sense of reflection in a mirror. Miss Sewell makes clear how the reflection of the mind in its self-criticism or the thinking about thinking in Paul Valéry leads to an analytical dialogue in his prose and to a synthetic monologue in his poetry. Culminating in *La Jeune Parque*, which satisfied the perfectionist poet after two hundred and fifty drafts, the entire writing of Valéry reveals the temptation of severing the abstract thought from sensibility (*l'âme opposable*) as the key to the problem of existence, life and death. The critical mirror, however, never reflects pure thought, but human nature. It leaves only two ways open: the narcissistic pride ignoring the desire for the "other" and ending in despairing suicide, when the mirror appears as a darkened stretch of water with no spectre of death; or the overcoming of intellectual pride under pain and suffering, and acquiescing to the necessities of the body, seeking unity not by elimination of, but by fusion with the universe, sun, and tree. Miss Sewell's interpretation, very rich in details, is not very easy to read, but convincing in its penetrating "explications" and illuminating parallels from all of Valéry's works, from Saint Thomas, as well as from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. It is particularly pathetic to see in this study

that Valéry tries to identify religion with mental impotence, despicable mystery, impurity; that he avoids the dark depths of the subconscious as dangerous like the Delphic pythoness. But the same Valéry feels irremissibly attracted by biblical symbolism since the pythoness is also hidden in his own brain, "the sensitive monster in its bony cavern." Comparable to Rilke, he testifies as a tantalizing Christian epiphany (Guardini) to the impossibility of going beyond the Christian pattern. Valéry simply feigns to reach by his own means the ideal of "Man in union and at peace with creation and himself." Valéry tries to restore this ideal not with moral but with intellectual means, seeing with the eyes of the diabolic serpent creation as imperfection, hating it and ignoring God. Against the poet's will, however, "God's image looks out of this dark mirror." Small wonder that the purest thinker and purest poet is torn by the forces he wants to conjure: "Anguish, my real vocation."

If this is so, I cannot agree with Miss Sewell's interpretation of the allegedly final decision of the "Jeune Parque": "The self's assent to its being, and forgiveness of itself." This answer is almost Goethean in its naive solution of all problems. I rather believe that the *Jeune Parque* will reconsider her unconditional surrender to Sun and Sea and Spring Morning, that the poem is not a close but an open one and that the *Parque* will rediscover one day her ineluctable anguish, as did the neo-pagan poet who died a Catholic.

Chiari's rather dry study of eight contemporary French poets strikes one by its lack of any system of values. In the relatively best chapter, that on the "Poet of the Christian Myth Pierre Emmanuel" there comes to the fore at least the central problem on which this whole modern French poetry hinges, the tension between intellectual pride and sexual cravings, the two extremes hinting to the mystery of immortality. The two Christian poets, the "irri-

tating," "belated romantic" Paul Claudel and Pierre Emmanuel, the "cosmic" and "apocalyptic" visionary, to whom "hell is the woman," are the only ones who stress fully the moral implications, Emmanuel more by an egocentric suffering, Claudel by a sacrificial liberation which Chiari resents, however, as not "human" enough. Chiari's praise goes to the imaginative poet who simply ignores the crucial problems of mankind, Jules Supervielle. Valéry's struggle between rational self-destruction and rejected though loved animality is somewhat confused with a Gidean position. Eluard, capable of silencing the metaphysical anxieties, is presented as the surrealist transcending surrealism since he defends love as the only protection against Death and Nothingness. The introductions to the exotic St. John-Perse and Henri Michaux, the masochistic though laughing rebel for "rebellion's sake" are too sketchy. The constant comparison with English authors, particularly Blake, Wordsworth and Dylan Thomas, and the bows to T. S. Eliot who honored this little book with a foreword, obscure rather than clarify the particularly French character of the poets at issue. The misuse of the word mysticism in almost all of the essays appears shocking.

Marcel Castay's three *pastiche*s of the literary method of Claudel, Gide and Proust are clever and amusing, but for connoisseurs only. The first "La cathédrale au soleil levant" imagines a man hurrying on a Sunday morning of Advent to Notre Dame Cathedral for confession and Mass. In his devotional concentration, he loses a manuscript. Later he appears as the only layman in the procession of the canons: Mr. Paul Claudel. The imitation of his style stresses the constant balancing of sensuous and ecclesiastical word-material, far-fetched comparisons and solemn rhythm. The second parody is "Le colloque imaginaire" with André Gide, who, invited to give a lecture in Avignon, preaches his slightly obscene platitudes on the beauty and greatness of

life with his gigantic, long adverbs placed before adjectives, embracing with his spiritual glance all continents, but also observing with interest the young slender *garçon du café* as the eternal Corydon. The third pastiche "Sous le regard en fleur d'un portrait" unites all the stylistic and ideological fads of Marcel Proust. It describes the author invited to a cocktail party of Mme. de Senlis, not to a *thé* with "madeleines" as it was the case "au temps perdu." In her waiting room he sees the youthful picture of the man, Marcel Proust, who as a child never could find sleep without the goodnight kiss of his mother. When the beautiful, aristocratic Madame de Senlis appears after endless digressions and psychological guessings, the suspicion that she is a niece of Marcel cannot be avoided.

It is regrettable that at a time where great works must die in drawers, these trifles have been printed "sur vélin Crèvecœur du Marais" and "vélin alfama." With less snobism and less expense the joke would be acceptable.

The interest in Simone Weil is still growing in the Anglo-Saxon world. Proof is this translation of the "Pensées" of Simone Weil selected by her brotherly friend and admirer Gustave Thibon after having been published in French as early as 1941. Thibon, at the wish of the blind, saintly Dominican, Father Perrin, admitted Simone Weil to his farm and found her an ill-adapted worker and a boring interlocutor whose endless questions and problems "literally wore him out." But her ascetic and charitable life, her purity, her intelligence, her originality soon won him over and he was entrusted with her notebooks to dispose of in 1942. Under the main headline "Gravity and Grace," reproducing Simone Weil's central thought that Evil drags us down and only Grace can lift us up, Thibon unites real gems of thought on Detachment, Imagination, Illusion, Love, Contradiction, Reading, Beauty, and so on. The quotation of some of Simone Weil's

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ideologically and literarily great *maximes* may encourage readers to read more of them in the book itself.

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Opuscula: Ein Sammelband. By Theodor Haecker. Olten: Hegner-Bücherei.

The author of these ten essays died in 1945. He had spent the final years of his life in seclusion in a small Bavarian town, to which he had withdrawn after some head-on collisions with National Socialism. Several times his house was searched, and his revealing diary (*Tage- und Nachtbücher [Journal in the Night]*) narrowly escaped the watchful eye of the Gestapo.

Haecker will live on as one of the most upright and fearless defenders of human and Christian values in an age of human degradation. Kierkegaard and Newman (some of whose works he translated) had been his guides on the way from neopaganism to Christian truth and finally to the Universal Church. A rare combination of gifts—a penetrating intellect, a passionate will, rugged sincerity, and great purity of heart—enabled Theodor Haecker to discern the weaknesses and fissures in the structure of German and European society in the period following the First World War, and his early indictments of the decadent liberalism and cynical relativism of the German intelligentsia rang out with the prophetic and tragic overtones of a biblical lament.

This reviewer remembers well his visit with Theodor Haecker in the early twenties, in that modest flat on the top floor of an old Munich tenement building. The square face, somewhat disfigured by a broken nose, but revealing hidden treasures of the soul in the radiance of the eyes, is unforgettable. Haecker had just published *Satire und Polemik*, the typical work of a neophyte in *rebus Christianis*, in which an almost fanatical zeal in the service of truth often stifled sound and balanced judgment. Soon afterward he was "discovered" by Karl Muth, the valiant editor of *Hochland*,

leading periodical of the German Catholic intelligentsia. In the pages of *Hochland* appeared from then on many of Haecker's essays (some of them included in the present volume of *opuscula*).

The opening essay on *The Temptations of Christ* strikes a keynote when it states that the Western Mind by virtue of its inherent strength and vitality is forced to the conclusion: "Either Catholicism with all its consequences or atheism with all its consequences." Haecker points out that the three temptations of Christ are social in character in as much as they refer specifically to the relationship existing between God and human beings, between the Creator and His creation. Christ's answer to the first temptation affirms the primacy of the spiritual; His answer to the second temptation sanctions the natural order of creation and the domain of secondary causes; and His answer to the third temptation proclaims the sway of divine power over the entire created universe.

Nothing is as certain, says Haecker, as *death*—our death and the death of the kingdoms of this world. And yet we thirst for eternal life. The "world," therefore, is plain insanity and absurdity without the certitude of Christian faith and without the certitude of God's existence. Christ exhorts us not to fear the powers of this world, because they can kill only the body. The tempter cannot harm us as long as we remain faithful to God and worship Him alone. Though it may often seem as if everything that is frail and tender were forlorn and abandoned in the tremendous contest of physical powers, the weakness of the flesh is sustained, strengthened, and saved by divine omnipotence. For God is nearest not in the turbulence of the elements, but in the great stillness. The tempter triumphs only when man tries to live "by bread alone," in despal of the orders of being and in a false trust in the power of the kingdoms of this world.

The essay on *Truth and Life* asks the pertinent and timely question: which is

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more: a "dead" truth or a "living" lie? In his answer Haecker passes judgment on the much vaunted German *Lebensphilosophie* (Dilthey, Spranger, etc.) and both implicitly and explicitly also on Kierkegaard's dictum that the "how" is always more important than the "what"; that a passionately professed and lived error is better and, in a certain sense, "truer" than a tepidly embraced "truth." "A 'dead' truth," Haecker writes, "is dead for us, but it is alive in itself and is thus infinitely more than a 'living' lie, even if such a lie should capture the whole world." While it is correct to say that there is no truth without life, this "life" does not necessarily mean our life or human life but rather the highest degree of life, the "life of the spirit." He who does not live what he preaches or teaches may yet acknowledge the absolute validity of truth, and he may realize that only divine grace can help him bridge the gap that separates thinking and willing from doing. He thus at least respects the order and hierarchy of being. The world is really out of joint when human life is completely divorced from truth, owing to the fact that the "spirit," the abode of truth, is no longer recognized. The order of being is "thoroughly perverted when man becomes the measure of truth."

Haecker, the master-grammarian and *Sprachkünstler*, approvingly quotes Nietzsche's saying, "I fear we can't rid ourselves of God as long as we still believe in grammar." He calls this an "uncanny" and true insight, because "from a faith in grammar . . . a straight road may lead to faith in God, that is, faith in the 'Word' (*Verbum*). And, conversely, the abolition of grammar may lead to the denial of the true God, just as the denial of God may thrust man into speechlessness or into that . . . linguistic mush and helpless stammering which characterize much of present-day literature."

The Concept of Truth in Søren Kierkegaard stresses the supreme importance of the philosophic inquiry into the nature of

being, because being is "the home of truth." "This," Haecker states, "is the basis of Kierkegaard's existential philosophy." It was Kierkegaard's tragedy that, owing to the schisms in Christendom and the loss of the principles of the *philosophia perennis* in Protestantism, he did not know the genuine Christian answer to his main question: "How can I become a Christian?" He had no longer access to the objective dogmatic "what" of Christian faith. "Perhaps no other figure in the intellectual history of Europe . . . impresses upon us more deeply the horrors of these tragic schisms . . . than the figure of this young Dane who, with all his immeasurable gifts, had to live in separation from the tradition of the Church and from the principles of Christian philosophy, principles which—so abundant was the grace he received and so great his own genius—he partly discovered independently and partly applied instinctively."

What is the real meaning of Kierkegaard's often quoted assertion, "subjectivity is truth"? Kierkegaard knew "instinctively" that in God existence and essence coincide. But, Haecker points out, Kierkegaard sometimes forgot that the same cannot be said of man, who is not *actus purus* but always a composite of potency and act. Man's subjectivity is far from being truth: man is far from satisfying the ideal demand to be as perfect as his heavenly Father. Man must strive, therefore, to become perfect within the frame of his creaturely imperfection. "No man (*qua* man), not even a saint, can realize the equation 'pure subjectivity' = 'pure truth,' except the God-Man." Thus, "the truth of subjectivity has being and existence only in God," whereas in man "it is only a possibility, a becoming in time, an imperfect becoming."

The most interesting and original among the *opuscula* is the essay entitled *Der Buckel Kierkegaards* (Kierkegaard, the Cripple). On the basis of some of the most recent Danish Kierkegaard literature (P. A. Heiberg, Frithjof Brandt, Rikard Magnusen) and of certain references in Kierkegaard's *Journals*, Haecker discusses the

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question to what extent the Danish author's philosophic and theological views as well as the tragic circumstances of his life (especially the broken engagement) may find their explanation in *det saerlige Kors* (the special cross), his "thorn in the flesh" (i.e., his "hunchback").

Kierkegaard was, according to Haecker, even in his external appearance a living disharmony and a paradox: *extra ordinem* in the dual sense of being *infra ordinem* (because of his physical deformity) and *supra ordinem* (as a thinker and poet, who towered far above his contemporaries). He was *der Grösste aller Zeiten* in Denmark and *einer der grössten der Weltgeschichte*: an "angelic or demonic spirit in a sick and disfigured body. And the whole is nevertheless *one* man, *one* person. This we may well call a paradox, and it is at any rate a great mystery of human existence." But what shall we say when Kierkegaard calls "paradoxical" in the same sense the greatest mysteries of faith: the Trinity and the Incarnation? These mysteries, says Haecker, may be termed paradoxical from the point of view of finite human reason, but they are certainly not paradoxical in the sense of being "absurd." In other words, it is paradoxical (almost to the degree of "absurdity") to find "the spirit of Apollo incarnate in the Silenus-like body of Socrates," but "in God there is neither absurdity nor paradox, because He is absolute unity and simplicity." In metaphysics and in theology, on the other hand, we meet with paradoxes again and again.

Haecker's final answer to the initial query of this Kierkegaard essay summarizes also the main themes of the *opuscula*: "There is no necessary or causal relation between physical deformity and a pessimistic philosophy of life . . . Kierkegaard, moreover, is not the author of a system of philosophic pessimism. He was convinced that the Christian religion was Truth. He believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; in Jesus Christ, the God-Man, the Second Person of the Trinity; and in the

Holy Spirit . . . A Christian may be gay, happy, serene, and in the most difficult situations never as despairing as a pagan, but this much is certain: he has no confidence in the 'world,' and he never believes that in it and through it everything can ever be in the best of order. This you may, if you like, call Christian 'pessimism.' But a Christian has an absolute, boundless confidence in God, the *Almighty*, Who is Love. And this you may, perhaps, call Christian 'optimism.' Both attitudes, however, in their togetherness form one unified 'Christian way' which in no way depends on the physical constitution of the individual . . . Kierkegaard was perhaps tortured by the fear that his children might resemble him, and by the more agonizing fear that they might then be eternally lost . . . He knew, after all, from personal experience about the affinity between the pathological and the demonic . . . Thus, without the hunchback many things might have been different. Truly, the mystery of the body is great." Nevertheless, "every evil issues from the heart of man, and from his mind . . . If, therefore, your eye is simple and luminous, your entire body will be Light—whether it be crippled or hale."

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Light on a Dark Horse: An Autobiography.
1901-1935. By Roy Campbell. Regnery.
\$4.00.

"Poetry was then, for me, the perspiration of other activities." We have had the wonderful perspiration in several volumes. This book contains the other activities. And they are quite as wonderful. It reads like a field report on the conquests of a brilliantly led expeditionary force—definitely an amphibious operation. Both as man and poet Campbell feels and acts like a natural force—a fact which may explain both his physical and poetic survival. For in both departments he has continuously flouted every probability and every prudent counsel. Apropos of his mopping up operations

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in Bloomsbury (*The Georgiad*) he says: "I always act on a precedent when I am in an unfamiliar predicament and invariably take one of the paladins of Chivalry for my Model—the Cid, Campeador, Roland, Oliver, or some worthy of that sort. They always bring one luck." This remark is to be taken as a literal gloss on Campbell's life.

His sense of the poet as a Protean natural force appears in his "distaste for letters through having come to associate them almost exclusively with corruption." He goes on: "I understood Rimbaud's revulsion from the life of letters. However, when I picked up a volume of Mistral it immediately deodorized my nostrils of the corpse-like foetor which I associated with *ces horribles hommes de lettres* as Claudel calls them. Here was a writer who really enjoyed existence without having to twist or pervert it first before it could be enjoyed."

Earlier he comments on the relation between his own omnivorous virtuosity in relation to the poetic process:

Mistral never jousts in his life but for the technical excellence of his description he might have been a professional like myself . . . In my interview with four critics on the North American Radio Service . . . they all agreed that the remarkable thing in my verse was a familiarity with the physics, chemistry, and biology of the natural and mechanical universes: and a knowledge of animals, fish, ships, engines, guns, machines, which no other modern poet possesses. It helps one to manipulate words deftly.

Mistral had a far greater knowledge of the practical physics of his time, and he acquired that knowledge and Homeric exactitude without getting his breeches torn. That is the difference between a born, inspired poet like Homer or Mistral and a laboriously home-made and self-made one like myself. To acquire my own sense of history I have had to live it physically through every phase: from paddling a coracle . . . to piloting a speedboat and a glider: from riding bare-backed horses to the latest thing in mountain-climbing with "matchless" motor-bikes . . . This knowledge, which is of

infinitely less importance than spiritual knowledge, nevertheless enables you to give form and obvious meaning to what would otherwise remain obscure and difficult. In one way I envy these great poets their inspiration which rendered experience unnecessary: but I doubt if I would trade the experience even for that supreme gift of theirs.

That the poetic process is a mysterious externalization, by reversal, of the inner drama of cognition and recognition is what is implied in these remarks of Campbell. And it is an entire mistake to regard him as a naïf or a wild man. For he has been intimately associated with all the great and sophisticated artistic talents of our century beginning in his teens at Oxford when he was schooled in symbolist esthetics by Tony Earp.

Describing the stages of his conversion in Spain:

Protestants go to these countries for spiritual fresh air . . . They ascribe the attraction which is really that of the Church and the people who have not been amputated from the Church . . . to the climate or the landscape . . . They always consort with the malcontents also. They have not the courage to disown what is wrong in themselves . . . Up to then we had been vaguely and vacillatingly Anglo-Catholic: but now was the time to decide whether, by staying in the territories, to remain half-apatetic to the great fight which was obviously approaching—or whether we should step into the front ranks of the Regular Army of Christ . . .

It was no longer safe to be seen in religious habit, though the diehard Evaristo, a great roaring lion of a man whose laugh could shake the rafters, deliberately flaunted his habit in broad daylight and it used to make me feel six inches taller to stride beside him as his body-guard down the streets.

In view of the splendors which precede, it is breathtaking to read the last sentence which promises another book: "On that day, [the day of his confirmation, along with his wife and children] before dawn, began an entirely new chapter in our lives, which had hitherto been somewhat drab and dull compared with the new splendours of experience

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for which we were lucky enough to be preserved."

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La Vie de Sainte Thérèse d'Avila. By Marcelle Auclair. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

When the "Wandering Lady of God" first saw her portrait by Frère Jean de la Misère, she cried out, "May God pardon you; you have made me ugly and bleary-eyed." If this book had been written during her lifetime, she would have had no reason to utter a similar complaint. Mme. Marcelle Auclair presents Thérèse d'Avila from childhood to death. The saint is described as a spoiled child, an unclioistered nun, a Carmelite lifted up in ecstasy, a foundress, an adept at letters, a woman endowed with virile genius, an angel given to girlish pranks, a mystic with the audacity of a conqueror. No human or superhuman aspect is neglected; she is seen as God made her, as her love for Christ and His creatures shaped her, as her own works transformed her. Thus Mme. Auclair has produced a book as engaging as a product of the imagination, but she has managed to retain the substance of authentic documentation. The biographer has used her materials with such skill that it is obvious she did not sigh, like the religious who was commissioned to examine the validity of Saint Teresa's visions, "I must read all these books to understand Doña Teresa de Ahumada." It was by living in the sixteenth century, by becoming the contemporary of Teresa, of Saint John of the Cross, of Philip II, of the Duke of Alba, of Gregory XIII, that the author has successfully managed to restore the prodigious era when Mexican gold shone so brightly, when Pizarro was among the Incas, when the King of Spain married the Queen of England, when the Spanish Terror made the Netherlands tremble, and when Saint Bartholomew steeped the streets of Paris in blood. The entire fresco of history is needed,

for the saint is too great, too active, too ubiquitous to be considered in miniature or against an isolated and unrelated backdrop.

Still, Teresa de Ahumada dominates the scene with her lofty stature, her immortal reform; surrounded by all the monasteries founded with so much trouble, in the midst of so many struggles, amid all the quarrels that the Inquisition sought out for her, she remains in the ascendant. Above all the warlike alarum and the fracas of the vehicles transporting the saint and her companions along the edges of mountain abysses, there are heard the clear laughter and the outbursts of gaiety of the foundress who did not wish any "foolish nuns" and who was so hesitant to accept a "crybaby" into her company. Was she herself not seen to dance and whirl about during the periods of recreation? And was it not she, who had such a poor voice, who found sport in improvising poetry and having her companions sing it? Her dialogue with God is often as familiar in tone as the candid cluster of the "Fioretti." Praying to God for a brother who refuses to win Heaven by taking up arms against Chili, she dares to protest: "If I saw, oh Lord, one of your brothers in such peril, what would I not do in order to save him!" Or when the Voice says, "Teresa, that is how I treat my friends," the visionary answers, "Ah, my Lord, that is why you have so few of them." She passes without transition from the spiritual to the temporal, from ecstasy to examining the account books, from the "Fortress of the Soul," from her most genial compositions to the thorough housecleaning of a poorly kept monastery, from the conduct of souls to the order to keep one's person clean and neat. How beautiful must have been and how incomprehensible remains this dialogue between those two overwhelming souls, Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, "the little celestial man." A "sublime misunderstanding" separated them: he refused to know joy even in God, and she found delight in divine love; his mind was tortured,

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and her nature was happy. When the founding Mother had called him to the Monastery of the Incarnation, he dropped everything in order to make haste to heed her summons. But when, having need of her, he came to seek her out with his mules and carriages, she refused to follow him. "There is no way to speak of God with my Father John of the Cross," she used to say, "because he enters in ecstasy immediately and you follow him."

A work of history and hagiography, this book represents an immense labor. Filled with love and talent, it is a revelation for those who have not plunged to the bottom of the work of Saint Teresa, who know only superficially the Spain of that time, a Spain ruined by war, where the nobility was showy and idle, the people starving; a country where each one waited for a little gold of the conquests to drop into his purse, when "the treasure of Montezuma brought back by Cortez was not enough to pay for a single one of the trips taken by Charles V." Admirable photographs and reproductions illustrate the splendid pages by this bilingual writer, who was raised in Latin America by the chance of her father's profession and who consequently possesses a perfect knowledge of Spanish. Also, prolonged stays in the country of Teresa have furnished her with a deep understanding of an earthly world which henceforth appears quite close to us; her lofty spirituality likewise allows her to lead the reader to the spiritual realm where Heaven unfolds before the eyes of the soul.

G. M. TRACY
Tr. Spire Pitou

Cherchant qui Dévorer. By Luc Estang.
Paris: Editions du Seuil.

The invisible and imminent adversary is present on every page of this full novel, which takes place between two wars against the background of a small seminary in the north of France. The principal characters are the "Fathers" who profess at the collège of Saint-Wandrille, but some of the sec-

ondary personages retain the accent of this region where the wind blows sharply under a low sky. Prominent roles are also given to some of the students—Elie, Antoine, and Jean—who bear the anguish, drama, and enigmas of their families in this carefully guarded enclosure.

Curiosity is acute in all these beings, and their desire for enlightenment leads several of them to filial ingratitude and the most revolting inquests. Mlle. de Borre lives with her father, a widower, teaches drawing to the collegians, and finds peace only on the day when she discovers that she is the victim of a culpability preceding her birth. Elie, guessing at the clandestine loves of her mother, employs the genius of a detective to confirm her painful suspicions; she finally unearths the pathetic intrigue, but the real explanation will always escape her, although the tragic epilogue will mark her entire life. Antoine, caught in a net of sordid complications, struggles with all the purity of his soul lest he be completely crushed by the knowledge that the women who have raised him are so mediocre and pitiful. Jean, twelve years old and approachable only by the gentlest angels, can feel the discord between his parents; he continues to suffer hopelessly from the vicious ugliness with which he collides without understanding.

M. Luc Estang has the gift of endowing the most diverse characters with life. His touch is so versatile and persuasive that he is able to reconstitute a motley group assembled by only the merest chances of existence: the seraphic soul, the monster, the saint, the calculating coquette, the pure and tormented boy, the brutal street Arab, the ardent woman, the lost woman, the lacking priest, the idiot in whom the soul is asleep. He mentions only briefly these indifferent professors who, instructors of a little world, are bound together in profound friendship and separated by deep-rooted enmities. But this is not important, for the preoccupations of these future parish curates barely skim the surface of the children entrusted to

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them. With what admirable strokes he draws the Abbé Douve, the Abbé Omer, and Père Lorraine! With what delicate shades he paints the portraits of the teachers truly inflamed by their spiritual heritage! Whether he analyzes with the attention of a scientist the collegian who is at this moment a child, at that moment a man, this morning an angel, that evening a demon; whether he caricatures an old hypocrite or a bloated barrel like Ghirlandagio, he performs with equal mastery.

However, no one is less a judge than the author of *Cherchant qui Dévore*. If youth, discovering the errors, the faults, and the crimes of its elders, is tempted to sneer like Shem before Noah, M. Luc Estang, removing the veil which humans place before their nudity, proffers only love and understanding for the weak and sinning. At the rear of his dense fresco there are some grimacing supernumeraries who are well suspected of an alliance with the devil, but does not divine compassion permit this poet to be released, even if only at the end of earthly life?

What will become of these persons shaken with passion, possessed of virtue, riddled by contradictory qualities, all sublimely torn, suspended between Heaven and Hell and sometimes capable of victory? Perhaps we shall know one day, since M. Estang has resumed with this new volume certain heroes of his preceding novel, *Les Stigmates*, and may continue with some of these in a later one. What reader would not like to know what Elie will be one day; if he will quiet the revolt; if he will subdue the cynicism aroused in him by the ugliness and injustice of the Here-Below? Will Antoine be another Abbé Douve? The little ones, when they become the elders, will they conserve the intransigencies which made them withhold compassion from those whose destinies are accomplished? These awakenings give pause, for we carry these imaginary beings with us not because we have met them in the pages of a novel, but as if we had known them formerly, in the

time of our youth. Still, if we had forgotten them in a peculiar amnesia, our memory is now restored. They will escape no longer. M. Estang has won his case.

G. M. TRACY
Tr. Spire Pitou

Procès du Héros. By Pierre-Henri Simon.
Paris: Editions du Seuil.

Témoins de l'Homme. By Pierre-Henri Simon. Paris: Armand Colin.

Readers of M. Simon's 1949 volume, *L'Homme en Procès*, will find cause for further interest in these two subsequent works of criticism, if only because Camus, Malraux, and Sartre are again considered. Duhamel and Saint-Exupéry, to whom M. Simon has devoted previous effort, are omitted; but a more comprehensive appraisal of contemporary literary activity in France is achieved.

Procès du Héros (1950), a triptych of studies on Montherlant, Drieu La Rochelle, and Jean Prevost, again employs a critical method of evaluation lashed to the tradition of Corneille: the contributions of the authors are measured in terms of heroic humanism. Artistic, intellectual, and personal struggles for newly defined forms of expression are patent in the post-World War I phase of French letters, and M. Simon's standards possess qualities well suited to contemporary criticism. His values highly determined, he calls attention to Carlyle's finding in the hero a means by which humanity continues. Thus, who are the genuinely active heroes on the literary scene? And what is the measure of their heroism?

The lengthiest essay is devoted to Montherlant and his concern for adolescence, love, religion, sport, violence, and war itself. His successive transitions are described: the initial attempts at conveying the expansion of the spirit, the later pause in Gallic hedonism and scepticism, and an ultimate passage into the realm of peculiar acceptance. Perhaps it is simplified, especially in view of M. Simon's incursion

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into sentences indicating that Montherlant is too much a sophist of letters, a noble blossom fertilized from decadence, an egotist and an amateur not exclusively enough concerned with truth and wisdom. It must be observed that M. Simon later revises his appraisal of Montherlant in *Témoins de l'Homme*. Drieu La Rochelle, the subject of the second chapter, is correctly adjudged a novelist rather than a poet, and the origin of his personal tragedy is traced to inability to choose between thought and action, cosmopolitanism and nationalism. Still, real tribute is paid to his craftsmanship; his attempts to surpass merely interior abstractions are sympathetically viewed. There is a pertinent and relevant analysis of the German and Italian delusions about fascism as a public and private path to happiness, and Drieu La Rochelle's suicide on the day of the Liberation of Paris is portrayed as flight to the terminus of despair. The treatment reserved for Jean Prevost is less magisterial, and reverently limited to "prudent approximations." Prevost accomplished a varied legacy of writings before being shot at the age of forty-three by the Germans, on his way to the maquis. It becomes obvious that M. Simon has too great respect for Prevost as an individual to move freely to a definition of his contribution as a writer. It gives pause that, when M. Simon finally meets the hero of a twilight tragedy, he should manage only cursory analysis and nevertheless make bold to observe that "... his death was significant: it crowned his life and thought," both simultaneously given to decision, patience, and sacrifice.

In *Témoins de l'Homme* (1951), M. Simon devotes separate but topically related essays to nine French writers in whom he observes true reflections of the contemporary period; his approach and standards are still classic, if one may so designate adherence to the precept that the proper study of mankind is man. He describes Proust's efforts to enter the realm of timelessness in order to escape from temporal decay, and the Proustian preoccupation with suddenly

important details. Paul Valéry is depicted as a Mediterranean disposition to depth, expanse, leisure, and light, and as a poet endowed with a faculty to embrace metaphysical entities. Paul Claudel is a man of action and a poet of Christendom, standing beside Péguy "with the earth of Joan of Arc on his shoes." These four poets, all of whom had won readers by 1914 and glory by 1920, constitute what might be described as the first half of the book, although no such formal division is made. The five remaining studies are devoted to a revised and somewhat self-conscious consideration of Montherlant, to Bernanos, Malraux, Sartre, and Camus. It is a temptation to report M. Simon's compelling observations about this fascinating quintet; it is impossible to withhold M. Simon's considered conclusion. Briefly, the reader is reminded that while disorder and unrest are sometimes only too evident at the moment, it is still true that men continue to seek intimate happiness so that they may share their discovery with others. M. Simon makes no secret of professing that the proper testimonial to the permanence of man's aspirations in his eternal need for an undecieved humanism and a substantial humanity.

SPIRE PITOU

Marquette University

Celles qu'on Prend dans ses Bras. By Henry de Montherlant. Paris: Gallimard.

La Ville dont le Prince est un Enfant. By Henry de Montherlant. Paris: Gallimard.

There are those whom one takes into one's arms and those whom one rejects, in one way or another. The thesis, baldly stated, runs off in all directions; and Montherlant's detractors may elect any way although they must reckon with the proper moment. It is exact to say that the drama of *Celles qu'on Prend dans ses Bras* is the drama of choice, circumstance, and love.

Montherlant presents two sexagenarians, M. Ravier and Mlle. Andriot, and a younger Mlle. Christine Villaney, a decorative artist with all the talents of a girl of eight-

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een years. M. Ravier, an affluent and influential antiquarian, at first hides and then reveals his love for the younger woman. In her turn, Christine refuses to consider Ravier as anything more than a willing purchaser of her drawings. When Ravier confesses his love for Christine to his assistant, Mlle. Andriot, herself in love with him, Montherlant begins to close the triangle by developing his favorite themes: frustration, inadequacy, and passion.

One of the curious features of this play is that the utterances of all three characters are falsehoods. Mlle. Andriot loves Ravier but denies it before him. Ravier detests his assistant but speaks to her in the friendliest manner. He claims that he seeks Christine's friendship; in reality, he is driven to possess her. Christine while rebuking Ravier's attentions at each moment, is still flattered and would be offended should he abandon her.

The language employed is precise, frank and even scabrous at times. The dramatist indicates certain passages to be eliminated when the play is staged, but the tone and theme remain, and the moral character of the play is not affected.

The play, then, is curiously classic in tradition. As pointed out by Jeanne Sandelion in her study of Montherlant's portrayal of women, the movement of the play is psychological rather than physical, and the individual characters have their specific counterparts in the tragedies of Racine. Mlle. Andriot recalls Phèdre in at least one instant, and Ravier conjures up memories of Phyrus in his alternate moods. And at the last moment, passion triumphs over honor, for ". . . nearly everything born is of impure origin. It is born in the mud, and it does not become worse than what is born in the stars." This is the conviction by which Montherlant's protagonist lives, and the audience may choose.

La Ville dont le Prince est un Enfant, a three act play by Montherlant, is preceded by a long dedication to the Reverend

C. Rivière. Although the dramatist indicates that it is not his intention at present that this play be offered in a theatre, he has nevertheless given Shavian stage directions. After having read *Celles qu'on Prend dans ses Bras*, this play comes as a surprise. Here is a drama without women.

Montherlant depicts life in a French Catholic secondary school. Sandrier and Sevrals are two normal adolescents. Their mutual ties seem a little exaggerated for boys, and their actions somewhat infantile; for example, when they mingle their blood. But they are honest and the interest remains. They have been the innocent victims of injustice. They have been longtime friends; yet the predilection of Father de Pradts, a priest of the school, for Sandrier and his jealousy of Sevrals lead to the ultimate expulsion of both boys. Once again the themes that unfold are recognition, kindness and joy coupled with jealousy, cruelty and rejection. The dramatic situation being based, as has been indicated, upon the device of using an all-male cast is a curious reversion to the Cornelian manner. Or even to Montherlant's earlier hopes for validity? Or an old problem made new?

As far back as 1925 books have been written about Montherlant and his works. In reading these two recent plays, we were surprised to ascertain that our dramatist has neither changed his subject nor his style. What was said twenty-seven years ago by Faure-Biguët in *Montherlant Homme de la Renaissance* may be said today: "The subjects that he chose: school, war, sports, love, he leaves them decorated, enlarged; he transfers them on a lyrical plane, he orchestrates them. The sentiments of his characters, the characters themselves, are directed like melodies. As for Montherlant's language, it is M. Albert Thibaudet who said: 'It is the most beautiful fruit of verbal flesh that we have felt today under our hand. The fraternity of this style with a juvenile body, the trunk of the plane-trees of Vaucluse, with

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the travertine gilded with Roman palaces. The hand placed on him feels a circulation of blood, water, rain, and sun.'" And yet this is an exaggeration, too.

—VICTOR SAMPON

Marquette University

Rainer Maria Rilke: A Study of His Later Poetry. By Hans Egon Holthusen. Tr. J. P. Stern. Yale. \$2.50.

Rainer Maria Rilke. By F. W. Heerik-huisen. Tr. Fernand G. Renier and Anne Cliff. Philosophical Library. \$6.00.

Rainer Maria Rilke: His Last Friendship. Ed. Marcel Raval, Introduction by Edmond Jaloux, tr. William H. Kennedy. Philosophical Library. \$2.75.

Letters to Benvenuta. By Rainer Maria Rilke. Foreword by Louis Untermeyer, tr. Heinz Norden. Philosophical Library. \$2.75.

The Life of the Virgin Mary. By Rainer Maria Rilke: German text with an English translation and Introduction by Stephen Spender. Philosophical Library. \$2.75.

Representative of the recent growing interest in the life and writings of Rainer Maria Rilke, generally regarded as the greatest contemporary lyric poet of Germany, are the five volumes under review: a critical study, a biography, two books of letters, and a volume of poetry, each of which offers a varied angle of approach to the poet whom literary critics have consented to give a stature in his own country comparable to that of Eliot, Claudel, Valéry, and Yeats in theirs.

Most scholarly and impressive of the volumes is Hans Egon Holthusen's study, *Rainer Maria Rilke: A Study of His Later Poetry*, translated by J. P. Stern. This finely critical enquiry is conducted in three stages: the first concerned with the esoteric poetry of Rilke's last years as to resources of language and metaphor; the second with his world of ideas; and the third with his late poetry, *qua poetry*, where "the aesthetic becomes actual, and the magic of a

language that is not a language of concepts has the last word; here, once again, a poem is no more and nothing else than a poem: a mysterious incantation, a metamorphosis of the world through language. And we must end as we began, listening to, seeing and showing forth, the perfection of this work: *ecce poeta!*" Dr. Holthusen, himself a poet and critic, finds that Rilke has quickened "by his astonishing advances and creativeness in the use of words" the most intimate linguistic sensibilities of the German language, and given expression through his metaphors and effulgent imagery to the consciousness of his age. To him Rilke is no poet of the ivory tower but one who, especially in his later work, was seriously concerned with the pivotal question of what is *real*, and what is man's place in the universe. But, since for Rilke, "feeling is the measure of all being and of all knowledge," reality for him resides only where feeling enjoys its inviolate self, and is perfected. This belief in the "perfection of feeling" is, as it were, the *a priori* and supreme axiom of his entire work which results in a monism of feeling whence arises the alluring power of his message, as well as the many defects and errors of his cosmology. Rilke's philosophy, thus reduced to a dialectic of the heart requires the poet not only to *think*, but also to *see* and *speculate* with his heart instead of his intellect, a dialectic which Rilke endows with an objective validity. Hence his philosophy of "pure inwardness" violates and usurps the real world, since it leaves some of the most decisive aspects of man's being unaccounted for. It likewise tends to erase the limits of the human entelechy, with man's concrete presence in history, and cuts off human existence from a personal being—one's own person, or the person of one's opposite. "Rilke is intent upon 'taking from love all that is transitive in it' . . . and refuses to see in God more than 'a direction of the heart,' lest feeling, through the requital of love, should be disturbed, interrupted, and thus prevented

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from attaining to its own perfection." Obviously, this way of thinking, which "declares God to be the son of man, which turns death into an immanent concept and aims at dissolving and annihilating all that is transcendent, must clearly be accounted anti-Christian . . . his is a will that refuses to accept as valid a beyond 'whose shadow darkens the earth,' and rejects the figure of Christ as an impediment on man's way into infinity." Thus whenever Rilke chooses Christian themes and symbols, he strips them of their meaning, substituting for them "psychological speculations" with devastating effect. It will be readily seen that Dr. Holthusen's view coincides with that of Romano Guardini, who considers Rilke's ideas as those of Nietzsche and Holderlin before him, as epiphenomena which live from the elements against which they rise, since they are incapable of being understood from their own center.

Throughout his critique Dr. Holthusen effectively illustrates his analysis from the *Sonnets to Orpheus* and the *Duino Elegies*. Rilke's last short lyrics he considers finally and separately as a delightful and quiet *bel canto*, or a *coda* to all his other work. And he summarizes his opinion on the poet's unorthodox thought when he remarks that with Rilke's as with Nietzsche's doctrines, modern philosophy has ceased to dispute, but is rather concerned with "the heroic consummation of his life, with the situation in which he lived and which he created." In Rilke we see "the conquest of an originally Christian soul by an anti-Christian consciousness . . . the same protest against the traditional hierarchy of values, the revaluation of all values. . . . His personal myth is as it were a Franciscan and seraphic variation on Nietzsche's philosophy of life and immanence."

But perhaps the best portion of the study is the question the author poses in his last chapter as to whether one can validly pass judgment on a poet in philosophical and theological terms: to abstract such content from his works and criticize it? Eliot's

statement that it is the poet's business "to express the greatest emotional intensity of his time, based on whatever his time happens to think," Dr. Holthusen considers essential and profound, but only half the truth. For there is no such thing as "pure poetry," "The poet too is part of the human order of things, he too is involved in the moral, religious and intellectual discourse or strife of the world; hence it is clear that such a spiritual and intellectual decision as a poem is influenced by non-aesthetic considerations too. . . . The poet desires not only to create beauty but also to expound truth." But in a poem a truth has no significance if it does not also appear in a beautiful form: "And only where it is the expression and formulation of the true can the beautiful be said to be artistically significant." In so far as the poet's aim is to attend, as does the philosopher, "to the operation of ideas, there can be no good reason why a reader or interpreter should not examine these ideas critically and, if need be, attack them." Still, such judgment could not be final, for "the language of the beautiful is different from, and secured against the language of the rational; and in the beautiful is enconced the truth of which it is itself the expression." Of such discriminating criticism is Dr. Holthusen's entire study, a work which cannot be ignored by anyone interested in evaluating the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke.

By contrast with this excellent critique, Dr. Heerikhuisen's biography, *Rainer Maria Rilke*, is anything but a balanced study or interpretation. If the reader is not initially startled by the author's remark in his preface that "anyone who expects to find in this book an ultimate truth or a certainty that is intellectually tangible will be disappointed," he should be at least strongly suspicious when Dr. Heerikhuisen closes his prefatory remarks with the statement that the book is "a testimony to a great emotion which, but for Rilke, would never have entered my life." If so, he will be prepared for the impressionistic criti-

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cism and interpretation which is to follow. Though the author's method follows closely that of a succession of facts and "phenomena" of Rilke's life, it is "insight and order of an intuitive rather than an intellectual kind," that he sets out to achieve and achieves throughout. For Dr. Heerikhuisen admittedly fears an intellectual method since "only intuitive perception of the whole can give true order to the wealth of material, while avoiding the consequences of too intellectual a method, such as reckless omission of facts or a serious misinterpretation of them."

With scrupulous adherence to this method he discusses Rilke as a product of his times, an age of specialization and materialism. In so doing he discusses mainly, as the chapter headings indicate: Rilke's *Youth* (descent, parental influence, education, in their influence on his work); *Growth* (studies in Prague, political activity, early writings); *Vocation* (awakening of poetic consciousness, "rationalistic pursuit of intuition," marriage, most important works); *The Great Conflict* (growth of inner problems, influence of Rodin, years of transition); *Crisis and Self-Communion* (contradictory desires, dependence on "inspiration,"); *The Long Road* (Rilke as assimilated by world events of 1914); *Fulfilment* (great release of February 1922); *The Duino Elegies* and the *Sonnets to Orpheus*; and *The Last Years* (Rilke and the younger generation, limitation of certain of his theoretical views, decline after great release, last struggle, the future). A Bibliography and Index complete the volume.

Throughout his book, Dr. Heerikhuisen knits the story of the poet's life into the development of his thought and poetry, a great deal of which is quoted in translation. However, despite its wealth of detail and copious illustrative excerpts from both Rilke's poetry and prose, the biography lacks all the essentials of critical judgment since the author's norm of judgment is none other than that of the author's "intui-

tion" and "emotion." As a purely impressionistic effusion, it is a perfect example of the type. To add to the disappointment is the heavy, lumbering translation, which reduces the reader to the necessity of frequently reading sentence after sentence, sometimes paragraph after paragraph, without grasping the substance of thought the author attempted to express. The two translators were apparently too much intent on word by word literalness with no attempt at or feeling for smooth, idiomatic nuance. If, however, one approaches the biography with his own valid norms of critical judgment, he will find the study valuable for its detailed biographical matter and its abundance of Rilkean quotation.

Of different genre from the foregoing volumes are the two selections from Rilke's letters, *Rainer Maria Rilke: His Last Friendship*, edited by Marcel Raval, and *Letters to Benvenuta*, with a foreword by Louis Untermeyer. The keynote of both volumes can be said to be sounded fully in the preface of the first when Edmond Jaloux in his study of this Rilkean friendship remarks that one of the special personal characteristics of the poet was the way

in which he singled out and recognized people who were right for him, or in other words, who resembled him, who belonged to the same intellectual or emotional breed that he did, or who were going to need his moral support. He recognized them quickly, struck up a friendship—which was seldom lasting, for very often he would sooner or later withdraw, perhaps when he decided that his special task was finished, or that he needed to conserve his energies for somebody else, or perhaps simply in obedience to a law of his own nature which is not very easy to define.

Nimet Eloui Bey, beautiful, cultured Egyptian known to European society in the period between the two world wars, was one of these friends, his last. In *Rainer Maria Rilke: His Last Friendship* are twelve letters of Rilke's (she withdrew her own) addressed to her, and handed to Raval a few days before her death, con-

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resenting to their publication only in so much as this might be of service to her friend. Edmond Jaloux furnished one hundred pages of introduction as a sympathetic study of this friendship. A complex character, with profound emotional depths, and capable of deep loves, Nimet, after reading Rilke's Notebooks of *Malte Laurids Brigge*, requested a meeting with him. Thus was begun a friendship which, though brief, furnished Rilke with "the last mirror in which he had the delight of watching beauty pour over his work." Mrs. Bey spent her last years in France, having nursed her husband through an illness to which she herself later succumbed. After her husband's death she married a member of the Russian nobility, Prince Metchersky, for whom she embraced the "orthodox religion." It was at the time of her betrothal to the prince that she went through a period of "spiritual revolution," which Jaloux attributes in part to her admiration for Rilke. One might point out a number of confusing statements made by Jaloux as regards this period of Nimet's life, one of them to the effect that "She received the visits of a pope, who made a deep impression on her, and who revived many of the impulses which had earlier been inspired or awakened by Rilke." Such a statement demands clarification.

The letters, brief as they are, let the reader glimpse the warmth and fulness of this, Rilke's last close friendship. But if to some readers there might seem in them an unwarranted effusion they will appear calm and restrained beside the poet's *Letters to Benvenuta*, Magda von Hattingberg, a Viennese concert pianist who, as Nimet Bey, came to know Rilke through his writings. "Benvenuta," a name given her by Rilke, connotes what she meant to him. This little volume presents Rilke's correspondence with Magda from February 1, 1914 to February 24th of the same year, written in Paris. To this woman also Rilke felt he could open his mind, and as Louis Untermeyer remarks in his introduction,

they are written "on two levels—statement and suggestion, observation magnified by imagination—but on many levels of consciousness swiftly and simultaneously. Sometimes the writing is placid and even happy; sometimes it is full of tortured apprehension." These letters serve as a series of kaleidoscopic flashes into Rilke's soul which he bares with the utmost abandon to his friend, his inspired and inspiring correspondent. They show Rilke, now going on forty (she was much younger) still seeking "for something, or someone, mortal yet beyond the flesh." In Rilke she found not a man but an apparition, a super-earthly saint, a visionary Fra Angelico—at their first meeting she thought: 'He has come by a miracle to our poor earth and me.'" The letters end at this point of meeting, about which Rilke wrote rather extravagantly but sincerely: "My heart shall reach out for your heart, as did the little John within Elizabeth for little Jesus within Mary—but is my heart pure enough for such sudden joy?" Had these two friendships been founded on belief in Christ that was *reality* rather than *symbol*, they had been incomparably more memorable. But the tragedy of Rilke's "dialectic of the heart" made that impossible. They remain, nevertheless, warm human friendships whose written communications make delightful reading.

Together with the first mentioned critical study of Rilke by Hans Egon Holthausen, by far the best of the other volumes is his *Life of the Virgin Mary*, a collection of thirteen poems written in the castle at Duino, a group of poems which the author specially loved, and of which he said that "the little book was presented to me quite above and beyond myself, by a peaceful spirit, and I shall always get on well with it, just as I did when I was writing it."

The cycle, first inspired by two pictures in an old sketchbook given Rilke by Heinrich Vogeler in September, 1900, namely those of the Annunciation, and the An-

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nunciation to the Shepherds, with a scene on the Flight into Egypt, furnished the primary inspiration of the sequence. Though two of the poems only were written at the time, the planned *Marienleben*, meant to be illustrated by his artist friend, Vogeler, he kept in mind. Though his first plan never materialized, when again he was reminded of it by Vogeler in 1912, Rilke at once set to work and completed the cycle within a month. The *Life of the Virgin Mary* (*Das Marienleben*), is a chronological following of Our Lady's life according to the scriptural pattern.

Though there have been several translations of Rilke's Marian cycle, surely the best thus far is the present one of Stephen Spender, for the rendering into English is not only a translation of meaning but a true flowing of thought, and a new poetic creation, comparable to the precision and beauty of Margaret Chanler's translation of Gertrud von Le Fort's *Hymns to the Church*. Quotation will tell more than accumulation of comment. At the dynamic close of the poem on the Annunciation we see

the angel, a youth's face to hers, that it combined with the gaze with which she looked up, and the two struck together, as though all outside suddenly were empty . . . Beholder and beheld; eye and eye's delight. Nothing at all else in this place—oh see this terrifies. And both were terrified. Then the angel sang his melody.

But perhaps the most beautiful of all passages is that which occurs in the poem on Our Lady's burial where

. . . she was like a lavender pillow.
Laid down awhile and set apart in order that the earth should, in the future, smell of her in its folds like a fine napkin.

Stephen Spender acknowledges his indebtedness to other fine translations of the *Marienleben*, notably that of M. D. Norton, which is of special merit and beauty. But to Spender's present translation, in the opinion of this reviewer, no other can be compared. After reading the Marian poems of Rilke one wonders much why it is al-

ways said of them that they are inferior to his other work, and that he himself also so considered them.

Anyone with an interest in contemporary poetry, and German lyric poetry in particular, must inform himself of and acquaint himself with these five newly published books on Rilke. There will be one or other among them that he will cherish with particular affection, but if one might predict two among them that critics and scholars will prefer, they are Hans Egon Holthusen's study of Rilke's later poetry, and Stephen Spender's translation of the *Marienleben*.

—SISTER M. THÉRÈSE, S.D.S.

Triple City. By William J. Grace. The Anno Domini Press. New York.

Wings Over Patmos. By Charles A. Brady. The Monastine Press. New York: \$2.50.

The idea of a central theme, introduced by a quotation from Maritain's *True Humanism*, is developed by Mr. Grace in *Triple City*. The City, "the so-called temporal order, the world enclosed in history, is a divided and double-meaning domain—belonging at once and at the same time to God, to mankind and to the Prince of this world." The five divisions of *Triple City*, although the poems stand separately and alone in each section, fuse into an organic whole.

Following his well-documented theory of creative writing, set forth in his recent book, *How To Be Creative With Words*, Mr. Grace uses natural speech rhythms, without rhyme, and allows what he says to shape how he says it. Concrete, sensory detail, such as "the wrinkle-knotted oak" in the poem *Awakening*, "chubby Medieval figures" and "dusty prow in anchored seaweed" in *The Word*, builds a firm foundation for the expanding symbol. At the same time, a simple lyric phrase, suspended from irony, pushes its way up through tensions of meaning, as in the concluding poem, i.e., "Blast the last star / that shines upon the bough of heaven at evening's close."

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The Word (An Idea-Drama—for Christmas) is, to this reviewer, the most effective section of the book. Here, the Artist says that *irony is not enough—nor beauty*. The voice of the Scriptural Reader acts as the Greek Chorus, while the plot moves, with and through various voices, anti-voices, Lazarus (the spirit of Capitalism, poverty-stricken in its wealth, condemned by the Church), Eurydice (Romantic Tradition), the Communist, the Bourgeois, to the conclusion in *One Voice*, which completes the transcendental triangle. The impact, on reading this piece, is strong; in choral presentation it would, no doubt, be even greater.

There are some instances where words of simple Anglo-Saxon origin, rather than of Latin derivation, might be preferred, such as, perhaps, *evil-threatening song*, instead of *imminent song* or *man hurled into nothingness* instead of *annihilate*, in the poem, *The New Science*. However, this point is open to debate, as changes of this nature might possibly destroy the tone as well as the texture of *Triple City*.

Intellectual speculation, with its sound Scriptural basis, supersonic terms, and imagination, blend to create poetry that radiates its light in varied directions on exciting levels of meaning in *Wings Over Patmos* by Charles A. Brady. The title poem stems doubly from the Apocalypse and the gist of a news dispatch referring to a proposed lunar launching ramp for atomic bombs. This might reasonably be said to set the key for this collection of poetry. In one sense, it does; as some of the poems wrestle with the problems and aftermath of the late War (or any war). However, the almost medieval quality of some of the imagery, the brilliant juggling with nursery rhymes (Mary is Princess, Fairy Godmother and Goose Girl of God all in one) and legends for children of any age—these are the other side of the coin, stamped with the four couriers "who ride on griffin wings, peacock-bright with staring eyes." The juxtaposition of fantasy and imagination

with down-to-earth vernacular makes cross reference strong and correlates meaning and overtone.

Complex, intense, yet at times disarming in their simplicity, these poems, with their wry humor, leave an indelible imprint. Solid detail rockets into Mr. Brady's apt "Roman candles" of imagery; Anglo-Saxon verbs and nouns give flavor and fibre to the lines. In the poem, *Musical Chairs*, the use of irony is at high pitch: "These Pinwheels with their fatal flanges—St. Catherine Wheels the kids on Dante Place used to call them. They blazed and sputtered in honor of a martyr, they said. And maybe that makes sense, too, like *Going to Jerusalem* instead of *Musical Chairs*."

The poem, *Dimidium Animae Meae*, is a remarkable combination of commonplace events, realistic, physical detail, and metaphor. The "popcorn hydrangeas on their wooden sticks" at the carnival and later, two brothers fighting over who should take a girl to the *Blue Moon* one night—"the girl had cow eyes and thick ankles"—specific detail of this kind undercuts and makes way for the refrain, finally resolved in the line: "And I am lonely, O my brother."

This Time It Is Somewhat Different might fall into a mere catalog of names that will obsess children, were it not for the sharp strokes that render the character of the individuals named. For example, "Fru Undset, crouched in the snow, while the black-winged birds went over, / Nursing dark thoughts in a heart that is sib to Gudrun's and Hervor's," or "Mauriac, pale, hungry, precise, writing intransigent lines."

In *Paradox of Trees*, I cannot help questioning the use of *'twixt*. This may seem like quibbling, in a book of the scope of *Wings Over Patmos*, but in the final poem, *Knell*, jewel-like in its perfection (and it is said that the finest emerald has its flaw) the line, "Alas! it is sad" is indeed a flaw. Otherwise, this book is one to turn to, to explore and to read aloud.

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In summing up the poetry of two poets, both associated with the teaching profession (Mr. Grace at Fordham, at present on sabbatical leave; Mr. Brady at Canisius College) it is heartening to find that scholarship has not dulled the edge of creative spontaneity, but has rather sharpened and enriched it. The modern and the timeless, placed side by side, in both cases, result in poetry at once individual and unique.

ISABEL HARRISS BARR

Introduction à Léon Bloy. By Pierre Termier. Paris: Desclee de Brouwer.

Any publication that aids the delineation of a controversial figure in literature is welcome; and Pierre Termier, an intimate friend and correspondent of Léon Bloy, offers his *Introduction à Léon Bloy* in this spirit, with a compressed biography that orients the reader who has not yet made Bloy's acquaintance, and with a resumé for those who have already been introduced: the circumstances of Bloy's life are briefly related in order to clarify the allusions of a personal nature in his journals and semi-biographical novels, *Le Désespéré* and *La Femme Pauvre*.

Bloy's birth at Périgueux in 1846, into a bourgeois family of an agnostic French father and a pious Spanish mother (a contrast sufficient to induce speculation on the cause of conflict so often apparent throughout his life), his attraction to prayer and the liturgy, his rebelliousness against the disciplines afforded by religion and education, an abnormal tendency to tears, and the frequent tantrums that ended in brutal attacks on his companions, are acknowledged by Termier. Bloy's meeting with Barbey d'Aurévilly, whose secretary he became, turned his creative talent from art to writing. After service in the war of 1870, finding it difficult to gain a livelihood from a few articles, he became a railroad employee. In 1878, he was dissuaded from embracing religious life on the advice of the Trappist whose penetrating character analysis discerned traits in Bloy precluding

such a vocation: "Vous êtes amoureux—cela saute aux yeux. Vous êtes tellement amoureux qu'en ce moment même vous frémissez jusqu'au fond de l'âme" (*Le Désespéré*). The appearance of *Le Désespéré* in 1886 and *La Femme Pauvre* in 1897, his marriage to Jeanne Molbeck, the struggles and deaths of his two sons, his devotion to Veronique and Madeleine, his daughters, and his joyful expectation of death in 1917 are itemized by Termier in a familiar style.

While the book does not add information, it is enthusiastic in tone and will help win more Bloy advocates. "Puisse-je augmenter de quelques unités le nombre si restreint aujourd'hui, des admirateurs de Bloy, je voudrais le faire aimer comme je l'ai moi-même aimé." So Termier swells the chorus of other biographers, worshippers and personal friends. To name but a few: Pierre Van der Meer, Johannes Jorgensen, Albert Beguin, Karl Pfeiffer, Hubert Colleye, Henri de Groux and Raissa Maritain.

Despite the avowed intention to enlarge the cult of Bloy and the concomitant eulogy, Termier discerns that first contact with Bloy is disconcerting because of inconsistencies. He classifies readers into three categories: those who are either shocked or revolted at the outset and who permanently remain aloof; those who recoil at first but who, after a second and third attempt, return in spite of themselves because of his sonorous style and challenging ideas; and the "stigmatized," whose mental hunger can be satiated only by lyricism and volcanic Catholicism. Termier's attestation: "Je divise ma vie en deux parties nettement et profondément distinctes: celle qui a précédé et celle qui a suivi ma rencontre avec Léon Bloy . . ." compels him to study the reason why Bloy is not more generally accepted. The disdain of publishers toward him, Bloy himself attributed to two causes: to a conspiracy of silence maliciously aimed against him by mediocre contemporaries, and to a providentially ordained

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purgation, a "dark night of the soul." The powerful sway Bloy extended to others in effecting a total conversion, Termier believes to have been a deterrent to the majority awed by his "absolute." Those who attribute their Catholicity to his efforts are proof of his dynamic personality and his genuine sincerity. The obligation though "de parler divinement toutes les fois que nous ne parlons pas en vain," took a route that shocked the Catholic sense of another group of readers, perhaps less fortunate in not having known him personally. Of secondary consequence indeed, but a gauge, Termier believes, seldom able to be applied to modern writers, is Bloy's power to move one to tears. "Bloy m'a fait beaucoup pleurer."

Bloy definitely desired recognition, not as a pamphleteer, but as a talented writer; he tried desperately to have his books accepted. Only the premonition of a posthumous recognition ("Je fais des livres qui vivront mais qui ne me font pas vivre") assuaged his thirst for acceptance.

Termier likens Bloy's exceptional emotional and imaginative capacity to the poet Hugo's, concerned as he is with the theme of suffering, tears, poverty and history, but accredits Bloy to be more correctly Catholic in his outlook. The chapter on Bloy, the "artist" serves as a springboard to discussion of his style. Bloy's "poetic" quality, his thought, though often marred by violence is redeemed by his "artistry," which is characterized by Catholicism; "son Christianisme est inséparable de son art." Despite Termier's attestation to Bloy's integral Catholicism, his adoration of beauty and lack of control led him to share in the literary style of his contemporaries. However, despite his protestation that to be "catholique" was his deepest concern, there is another side to Bloy which we must not overlook, that is, how such a thorough Catholicity, which certainly existed in other individuals and in other epochs, gets its particular tinge in the "homme de lettres" of the period of literary Naturalism and

might even be compatible with it. Since no serious writer can so completely divorce himself from his own age as not to reflect in some manner the peculiarities of thought which characterize an epoch, it was impossible, therefore, that Bloy escape such influences. This fact is often ignored entirely in studying Bloy. Termier at times intimates it but too faintly to credit him with discernment in this respect. The period in which Bloy wrote, designated in French literature as Naturalism, is betrayed by his vocabulary and by his choice and treatment of topics. Naturalistic literary motifs of a psychological nature of *Le Désespéré* and *La Femme Peuvre* make debatable his claim to an integral Catholicism. The type of thinking that allies spiritual and naturalistic themes, likewise resorts necessarily to a similar combination in vocabulary and style.

Still, the staggering Catholic vocabulary of Bloy's novels, unintelligible to non-Catholics and inadmissible to Catholics because of its lack of spiritual refinement, is balanced by an inexhaustible fund of naturalistic terms used literally and figuratively, according to Bloy's need. While one might reject this approach, such a condition is less reprehensible than the use of Catholic terminology for naturalistic subjects, or indelicate expressions to describe certain spiritual experiences and Catholic conceptions. Bloy also gives evidence of his particular affinity to the literary movement of the day by an impressionistic style, by a preference for periodic sentences and nominal elements, by a flair for replacing adjectival forms with abstracts and the unconventional position of adjectives, nuances obtained by a tentative gradation of increasingly exact words. In sum, a struggle to render what is most inexpressible in thought, vague and most elusive in form, and an attempt to translate the subtle confidence of neurosis, cause Bloy's naturalistic style to be necessarily impressionistic. In other words, he was intensely concerned with expressing those visible aspects of

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the art of speech. His preoccupation with things which the art of design can express but which before 1860 were prohibited to light, odor and sound effects makes one ponder which predominates, the "poet" or the "artist," as Termier styles Bloy. Acknowledgement must be given to him both as "géant de la pensée" and "un maître de la forme." The clarity, elegance, force and brilliancy of his style will, we agree, cause his books to be translated into several languages and secure for him a permanent place in literature. Termier reiterates that Bloy may be loved or hated, but he can no longer be ignored. Here, we believe, is the reason. Bloy's originality springs from the fact that to him counter tendencies are not opposed but, on the contrary, are harmonious as in many similar Catholic types of the Baroque Age. His longing for the "good old days" of the Crusades makes him at once the nostalgic victim of ascetic medievalism and the ultra modern child of a decadent civilization. The interrelation between his outstanding emotional features in thought and his naturalism in language (apparent to those who read deeply into his works rather than to the superficial peruser of quotations culled from less impassioned pronouncements) merits for him the importance of being the forerunner of a literary movement to see full flowering after his death.

If Bloy fell short it should be remembered that he was the initiator of a movement that penetrated into the heart of things Catholic. He was unique in his age and did not develop perhaps by reason of the contagion of his milieu. It was for Baumann, Bernanos, Claudel, Mauriac, Péguy and the authors of the Catholic Revival that he struck the march as well as for those who made no secret of the fact that they went to him for inspiration. Bloy often (*Lettres à sa Fiancée*) spoke of the current in literature that he would inaugurate. Christian spirituality was his triumph, even if he did not attain the recognition he sought during his lifetime.

SISTER M. ROSALIE, O.P.

Aufzeichnungen und Erinnerungen. By Gertrud von le Fort. Benziger.

In her most recent publication, Gertrud von le Fort presents us with another book, this time of smaller size, but nevertheless valuable in more than one respect. The spiritual feeling and the natural urge to look at the world primarily through a woman's eyes and heart has received its early impetus from the deeply religious soul of her mother. When the latter died shortly after World War I she left one of her daughters, Gertrud, the precious legacy to carry on the preaching of the good life. She has proved herself to be a most faithful daughter.

In looking back, the spirit of this missionary occasionally refuses to permit her to stay close to the ground, but rather compels her to rise about it and remove herself from the stark realism of the day in abstract observations the theme of which, nevertheless, remains life in the light of religion, and the fatherland, in the light of history.

The various, outwardly heterogeneous pieces of this book were hardly intended for a large audience. Yet, whether her early life, literature past and present, or the problems of our own time are discussed her work and personality are strongly mirrored in them. She writes with the subjectivity and tender touch of a woman of unsurpassed emotional and aesthetic adjustment that makes her behold not so much the beauty in things as the beautiful way to these things. We welcome them as a new display of the great religious zeal of the convert whose forebears had once fled from Savoy to Geneva into the arms of Calvin ("Hymns to the Church"), and also of her love for the native soil ("Hymns to Germany").

Her dispassionate studies may swell to the volume of the voice in the wilderness of our day in the face of man's deeds and achievements amidst the world's materialism as contrasted with woman's silent work and tremendous responsibility. "When a

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man falls," she quotes, "he falls alone, but when woman falls a whole people fall with her." The appalling state of torn marriages and ruined families can be remedied only by a superhuman effort and sacrifice, never by the very means that brought about the downfall. "Is the revival of the Christian World of the West possible?" is a challenge that is exceeded by the question: "Do we wish to revive it?" Thus the poetess asks. All her answers breathe the faith of Gertrud von le Fort who intimately knows the hidden fervor and tremendous strength of prayer as practiced through the centuries by mothers, the religious, and the saints. Her brief discussion of the Easter triumph offers a subtle, though distant, transition to Christmas in her "Imitation of Mary" as only a person of her mystic sensitivity and vision could perceive it. According to her, the inner mission in life, by its very nature, is fulfilled through womanhood. With an eye in the direction of our own country she divines a lasting peace only in the effort of all to improve all things to further harmony, not to forget the hapless children of postwar Germany because the future is dependent on them, too. With a forceful organ fortissimo von le Fort's voice rings out, in conclusion, in an admonition against a neglected past with a bold outlook forward toward peace on earth to men of good will.

Georgetown University

ANTON LANG

Woina-Woina: Russisches Tagebuch. By Curt Hohoff. Dusseldorf: Eugen Diederichs.

Missa Sine Nomine. By Ernst Wiechert. Munich: Kurt Desch.

Can we say, seven years after the war, that we have penetrated any deeper into its mysterious meaning? Here is book that will help us to be sincere about it and recognize that we have not. *Woina* is Russian for war. "Woina, Woina," cried some of the Russian soldiers when they were

taken prisoners. Under this title, Curt Hohoff, a young Catholic, gives us his diary of the war in Russia; it covers the time from the first day, when the fighting began along the river Bug until the beginning of the battle for Stalingrad; and then the retreat and dissolution of German armies from Kursk to a place west of Kiev where the author was wounded.

The book is a personal diary and doesn't pretend to be anything else. No order is intended but that of the succession of the events, random reflections and conversations of the day. No attempt is made to eliminate the accidental or use it as an illustration of a universal idea; no design is as yet visible. It is history in its crudest state, undigested, indigestible.

What makes these notes look so fair and sincere? Is it the absence of any forced explanation, the young soldier's unwillingness to make the events conform to a pattern of history, be it Hegelian, totalitarian, democratic or even Christian? It is more than that. It is an admirable readiness to suppose and accept the message of that enormous part of our history which is his daily experience, however indiscernible that message may be. Once he speaks of the mysterious grammar which is behind nature and history and even behind God's revelation and which He did not deliver into our hands. In the midst of death and destruction, human suffering and inhuman crimes he is looking out for that final word of God in an attitude of faith, which is the evidence of things that are not seen.

Missa Sine Nomine reveals that the days that Ernst Wiechert spent in the concentration camp were not without consequences for his work. All the bitterness that gathered in his mind and heart during that period is present in his post-war books, accentuating and sharpening the one central question of all his writing: Where, in the end, do we find salvation? What will ultimately and definitely integrate, not only eliminate or overcome, the evil that has grown to such dimensions? For those

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who survived the war or Buchenwald, the question had to be answered. *Der Totenwald*, Wiechert's short account of his period in the concentration camp, had shown how urgent it was. *Missa Sine Nomine* is the answer.

One of those who survived the horrors of such a camp, a member of the lower Prussian nobility, comes back, filled to the brim with what he has gone through and empty of everything else. The inhumanity of men has eaten up the human substance of hope and natural charity in him. He finds his castle occupied and willingly moves to the cheap and primitive quarters of his former shepherd, close to the moor, close to something untouched and undefiled by human hands. Here he slowly recovers. The moor, the silence in natural growth, the cry of the curlew, the forests and the morning light, but also Mozart's music, the wisdom of the fairy tales and the Bible (which is like one of them) show him where health and moral strength, confidence and charity can be regained. There is "that mysterious impenetrable depth of nature at whose threshold man is waiting, a stranger." It will give him the victory of the heart, the quiet strength, the integrity inside which "life and word" are again identical. It will change him as a seed is changed into a flower. He will be able to forgive his political and personal enemies, even those who still try and almost manage to kill him. He is ready now for the supreme sacrifice of receiving into his house the mistress of a member of a Nazi post-war underground group who in his diabolical wickedness personifies Nazism at its worst, and, in a symbolic gesture, he accepts her child as his own.

It is hard to believe the thesis of this story but it is easy to be drawn into it, as thousands were, to be captured by the rhythm of its movement back into the depth of irrational life. The supernatural, spiritual, intellectual and moral values are gliding back into the darkness of a purely natural, even biological area. Nature in its

deep sanity makes possible the change of heart and the freedom and the victory; it is the only redeeming force: "Life is greater than God," as Romain Rolland once said. *Missa Sine Nomine* is a very suggestive term for the process of natural redemption through a sort of sacred sacrifice, as it is described in Wiechert's novel. "Sine nomine" means not only without the artificiality and limited intelligibility of the human word, but also without the grace and illumination of the logos, the Word of God.

The structure of the novel reflects its theme. Its action is constantly interrupted by long, sometimes very beautiful descriptions of landscapes, plants, birds, life in nature, calling back, so to speak, those who have gone astray from the "Word." The characters, on the other hand, do not come alive. Their ideological burden is too heavy for them to carry, as it must have been for the author himself.

JOSEPH SCHWARZ

Cri des Profondeurs. By Georges Duhamel.
Paris: Mercure de France.

Self-forgetting, generous, sincerely suffering Patrice Périot, a scholar entirely lost to the happenings of the outer world in his quest for scientific truth and his desire to help distressed mankind, finds through compassionate love for his children and his younger son's firm faith, his way back from agnosticism and doubt to God (*Le Voyage de Patrice Periot*, Paris 1951). Félix Tallemand, on the contrary, is the realistic hero of our novel, a harsh intelligence, firmly rooted in the bourgeois tradition of materialistic possession, unemotional, selfish, efficient, a small size edition of Georges Sorel. He shows a slight relationship to young Joseph Pasquier, too, but lives in the transposed setting of a Paris torn by war, occupation, and the period subsequent to its liberation. He is even more of an inverted picture of Salavin's introspection, because he has not the courage to carry his wickedness to the last consequence,

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much in the same way as Salavin fails to reach holiness because he does not want to yield entirely to Grace.

This is the story Félix Tallemand outlines with almost cynical sincerity in his diary, begun in 1947, one year before his death. A chemist by profession, brought up in the positivist—scientific training of the early Twentieth Century, Felix feels so strongly the urge to affirm his own self, which he thinks superior because it is seemingly submitted only to reason, that no bonds of affection, no human consideration, can check his passion for dominating the domestic and economic world placed within his reach. Knowingly and calmly he destroys successively his wife, Melanie's love, his daughter, Monique's life; then he annihilates his business associates' position and fortune by using cleverly the circumstances created by the German occupation of Paris in 1940. He sends a whole family to a concentration camp and subsequent death; in the last minute, he joins the "Résistance." Finally he brings about his sick brother's untimely death by injecting the wrong drug into his veins, and, by destroying his brother's last will, he becomes his sole heir. He has reached the goal of domination he had set for himself. At this very climax of success, however, Félix Tallemand's conscience becomes aware of the possibility of guilt, of the wrong he has done, this wrong which he thinks may be redeemed by material means. A growing feeling of restlessness and misery shows him the necessity of obtaining pardon, freely granted by his victims. This search for pardon becomes an obsession, and he collects pardon as "une pièce de caisse," as he puts it. Relentless remorse takes the form of moral and physical distress: Félix Tallemand is slowly dying from cancer, without knowing it. Does human pardon really cancel his debt? Are the accounts truly closed? No, because he has now to face divine justice. The unbeliever is looking for the words which might give him access to God, the long forgotten words

which, on the last day of his life, heave up to his lips: the *De Profundis*: "Du fond des abîmes, j'ai crié vers toi, Seigneur . . ." —But he adds: "Seigneur . . . Seigneur . . . J'appelle Seigneur qui pourra m'entendre et me délivrer. La mort, peut-être? Le néant, peut-être?"

We shall not know the answer given by Félix Tallemand, for the diary ends with these question marks. This is a new version of the search for Grace, which so many of Duhamel's characters show, the working of conscience in a man who has opposed and rejected adjacent faith, until the hour of trial comes upon him. Does Duhamel consider that Félix Tallemand has converted himself through his desire for salvation, by working his way towards the pardon of his guilt through a last minute's repentance? Has the positivist here been overcome by the mercy of God as well as in *Patrice Périot*? Though the author does not take sides, I cannot imagine that he intends to give us purely a recreation of heroisms, sacrifices, despairs, and betrayals he has observed with compassionate understanding in a tragic period of our times.

Duhamel has rejected the idea of writing "un roman à thèse," but he tries to show the impact of ideas, in this case political as well as philosophical ones, by using figures of every day life to illustrate the inward reality which appears behind things and events. The story is written as a first person narrative; therefore, we learn only the facts, sensations and words to which Tallemand attaches most importance, even those which survive most vividly in the various periods of his consciousness. Sometimes they are also colored by the desire to make his conduct appear "legally correct." Whereas the true motives for the part he wants to play can often be easily discerned by his denying the feelings others might attribute to him under such circumstances. From this ensues his reluctance to give any credit to affection,

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noble sentiments, or to show any emotional interest in persons or events.

The style used by Félix is supposed to record, in a purely rationalistic method of Cartesian accuracy, events, characters and his own self in merciless analysis. A terminology as clear-cut as a scientific or banking report reflects his business and scientific training; he deliberately rejects any emotional language in order to better affirm his domination of feeling through will power, which, in turn, has crippled in him the ability to express true feelings such as distress and affection.

The setting is threefold: a well-to-do bourgeois home, but with no extravagance, no elegance, because it is subordinated to two other elements: the factory and the office which, together with the car, form the frame to a mind that domination of material values essentially preoccupies. Industrialism, as Tallemant views it, is not primarily money, but a power for producing value, a tool for domination over one's neighbor, until it becomes a passion sought for itself and never satisfied.

Though Félix tries to live up to his ideal of impassibility, his character made up of inferiority complexes, develops in the atmosphere in which he is living: the family complex and his hatred for the "clan," who never recognized his merits, and his anti-intellectualism and anti-religiosity, born of the failure to understand and love his wife. His scientific studies have strengthened his belief in heredity and determinism, an explanation for his hatred towards his brother Didier, who represents family tradition, moral strength, and religious force. None of the three women in his life might be called his opponent. They are painted with subdued colors, self-forgetting, loving, forgiving, and resigned to their sufferings. He considers them as living in a world foreign to his thought and entirely unreal to him: the world of faith. Therefore he does not even make an attempt at penetrating their characters.

His only counterpart is in fact Abel Zamian, who seems to come from nowhere, and whom he recognizes later as fleeing in a German officer's uniform. He is a sort of Mephistopheles who appears every time Félix Tallemant wishes to start an action to secure more material power. Zamian is the one who teaches him the relativity of good and evil, the necessity of action for exceptional minds; he sets before him the temptation of rising above ordinary human standards of living by despising the rules which have been traditionally set for moral behaviour. But Zamian is also that mysterious being who makes him ponder the problem of human destiny while ascending the steps to the towers of Notre Dame cathedral, when he asks him: "Croyez-vous à l'immortalité de l'âme?" The dialogue with Zamian continues, even when, months later, he is not physically present any more, and it seems to be his voice which murmurs the quotation taken from Epictet's book: "Our good and our evil lie only in our will," at the very moment of Didier's death. The remembrance of Zamian's ideas and words haunts Félix Tallemant until the very last moments of his life. We therefore might sometimes doubt the reality of Zamian's physical presence and perhaps interpret him more adequately as a reflected creation of Félix Tallemant's conscience. Zamian is the first one to drag him towards sin and crime, but later also to the search for pardon and perhaps to the finding of Grace.

In what consists the real value of this novel? In the true picture of a troubled, contemporary period which has marked a turning point in French life and thought. More or less, we all have met Félix Tallemant during the war in occupied Paris and witnessed with revulsion the morally criminal actions he tried to conceal with the veil of legality. Duhamel, however, comforts us with the assertion that "la vie ne se ramène pas à ce jeu: avoir prise sur l'adversaire." The greatness of Duhamel's art lies, in this case, in the creation of

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Abel Zamian's figure, half real, half unreality, with whose help the problem of a mediocre existence is broadened into the solving of crucial questions about good and evil. We find ourselves placed before a new aspect of contemporary "inquiétude": the search for the infinite which reveals increasingly that faith in the scientific approach to the problems of the universe cannot alone solve the meaning of human destiny. Through his dispassionate presentation of a human life, voluntarily deprived of any sensational display of style or characters, Duhamel shows himself again as a master of composition endowed with a profound knowledge of the soul.

MARCELLE VON MAYER

Trinity College
Washington, D. C.

The Withered Branch. By D. S. Savage.
Pellegrini & Cudahy. \$3.50.

It is difficult to say whether this volume of literary criticism is more admirable for the principles which it trenchantly enunciates in its Preface or for the clarity and pertinacity with which it adheres to them in the body of the essays. I have rarely seen a work of this type which sticks to its guns so closely and unflinchingly; this is done, moreover, with no straining and pulling at facts to make them conform to theory. The criticism of Hemingway, Forster, Virginia Woolf, Margiad Evans, Aldous Huxley and James Joyce flows inexorably from the tenets laid down in the Preface, and only in their application to Joyce do I see any slackening off of the admirable and almost inevitable line of application. This is perhaps due not so much to a less careful application than to the complexity of Joyce, which I do not feel is adequately handled in the thirty-odd pages devoted to him.

But what are some of Mr. Savage's principles? Let us hear a few of them, with the antecedent thought in mind that they sound strangely and in most welcome wise like literary applications of the *Philosophia*

Perennis. He begins with the "artistic synthesis," which is the result of the artist's activity "to create the artistic entity which shall adequately objectify his subjectivity." But these two terms—subjective and objective—have "to meet and fuse to illuminate and to concretize each other, forming a third entity, a diamond of compressed carbon." In order, then, goes on the critic, "to understand the nature of the artistic synthesis we must put our finger on the third term in which the disparate terms may be drawn together and resolved into unity. That term is Truth. I use the capital initial to emphasize that truth is an absolute."

This frank and fearless approach to literary criticism and to the philosophical principles underlying it is, I submit, at least refreshing in an age and among literateurs who flinch from the facing of the possibility of any absolutes.

But Mr. Savage is not through shocking the anti-absolutarians. He continues:

While the novelist may well be devoid of the capacity for systematic abstract thought, there is no good novel which does not demonstrate . . . a process of thought. The common factor between the thinkers and the novelist is precisely their orientation to truth . . . Before the novelist can embody meaning in his work, he must have discovered the pattern of meaning in experience. At his highest and most complete, his artistic task is secondary to and dependent upon a prior personal devotion to truth.

This is obviously to give short shrift to any "art for art's sake" theory, which Mr. Savage then proceeds to do explicitly.

This is but a summary treatment of the extraordinarily rich, if brief Preface. Basing his criticism on this ground, Mr. Savage then goes on to examine the attitude of the various authors to this primary matter of truth. Listen to his judgment on Hemingway—a judgment that would not be changed, I believe (and ought not be changed) even if the critic had finished *The Old Man and the Sea*:

The wider implications of the above

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examples of Hemingway's manner and matter are, of course, related to the almost complete extrusion of his vision of life upon the plane of the external—the plane of extreme objectification where experience is alienated from its subject. To deprive life of its inwardness, and to see men, not as personalities, but as objects, as things, is to open the door, not for a morally condemnable cruelty or brutality so much as for an even more devastating, because cold and spiritless, contempt of human values and of human life, which puts killing a man on the same level of actuality as cooking an egg or blacking one's boots.

Mr. Savage's conclusions on the other five novelists are no less stringent and needfully corrective of much of the thoughtless adulation that has too long usurped the function of valid criticism.

He gives as the reason, for example, for Forster's long silence the fact that he belongs to the second order of "significant writers," those who, though they may have worked out, "in the course of their art, a more or less significant personal logic," have not "succeeded in achieving a valid inner integration which will remove them to the plane of the creators." Their fate, as he sees it exemplified in Forster, is to "relapse into non-significance."

Again, the "annihilation of personality in the stream of the non-personal" is adduced as the "logical consequence of Virginia Woolf's basic monism." And Huxley's work, which began in the novel of futility, to cross over for a while into the novel "in which the potentiality of meaning seemed for a time to offer itself," has finally entered the dead-end street of "a positive accentuation of futility accompanied by a positive doctrine of non-attachment and impersonality." Lastly, Joyce's whole work "is a symptom of the self-subsistent ego, turned in upon itself through the rejection of meaning consequent upon the initial failure of belief."

If this all sounds as though Mr. Savage is just cantankerously against all modern novelists, it will be good to pay special

attention to the ending of his Preface:

It would be mistaken to condemn these novelists for their failures, not simply because their condition is also ours, but because of the real contribution that is made by the mere articulation of their situations, in their contributions to speech, which are contributions to our understanding of ourselves—even when it can be clearly shown that the course they have taken terminates in speechlessness . . . These novelists have . . . declared themselves and spoken their meaning, and it behoves their readers not to submit passively to the spell, but to examine that which is spoken and to relate it to their own understanding.

I would mention in passing that Mr. Savage's style, even for the high and delicate matters he is so authoritatively discussing, is a little too charged with literary and philosophical technical turns of phrase (shall I dare the word "jargon"?). Surely it is possible for one who knows his field so competently to write in more straightforward and attractively simple language?

—HAROLD C. GARDINER

The Literature of the Spanish People. By Gerald Brenan. Cambridge University Press.

It never has been an easy task to write about the development of an entire national literature, and one suspects that the tastes of the present century, to say nothing of the increase of factual information, have not made the creation of such a work any easier. No one can criticize contemporary scholars, therefore, if they have tended to channel their efforts in the line of critical evaluation of individual authors; the problems of synthesis and the risks of superficiality seem to multiply alarmingly in proportion to the number of writers and literary periods included in the scope of any given study. This author's achievement is all the greater, not because he has solved all the problems that a literary history presents, but because he has known how to select the ones of greatest interest to con-

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temporary readers and to offer his solutions undogmatically with simplicity, color, and sound literary judgment.

Mr. Brennan has given us the most recent successor—the only one in almost a quarter of a century—to the surveys in English by Ticknor, Fitzmaurice-Kelly, Northup, and Mérimée and Morley. Rather than a manual of literature, his book is a history of major figures from the Middle Ages to the present day. The pruning has been vigorous, and the author has deliberately omitted discussion of the figures he considers secondary; yet he has maintained chronological equilibrium by assigning approximately one-third of the chapters respectively to the Middle Ages, the Golden Age, and the modern period. The individual writers who receive most attention are Juan Ruiz, Cervantes (a brilliant summary of the complexities of the *Quixote*), Lope de Vega, Góngora, Quevedo, Gracián, Calderón, and Galdós. A considerable number of pages, deriving in part from Mr. Brennan's long experience as a collector of folklore material in the Peninsula, are dedicated to analyses of verse forms from the time of their origins in the remote centuries of the Visigothic and Arab periods, and constitute one of the most interesting and original contributions of the book. The author speaks with particular authority on the development of the *villancico*, the *seguidilla*, and the *copla*, and has summarized in the Appendix the recent and revolutionary discoveries in this field. This sensitivity to popular sentiments and expressions reinforces the critic's insight into all types of poetry and is revealed most effectively in occasional detailed interpretations of selected examples.

What makes the style of the book so readable in spite of the accumulation of factual data and specialized knowledge which must be conveyed, is the impact of the personality of the author. This is expressed in part by his honesty and is reinforced by his gifts of description. He does not hesitate, for example, to say that he

finds the fancy-dress charades of Zorrilla tedious, and describes Núñez de Arce drily: "A virtuoso in rhymes and metres, with all the sonority of language of the disciples of Victor Hugo, he suffers from the disadvantages of having nothing to say." And is it not accurate to define the difference between the burlesque action and the lengthy moralizing combined in the picaresque novel, *Guzmán de Alfarache*, by suggesting that one has to imagine the protagonist as Charlie Chaplin viewed by a sixteenth-century Calvinist minister?

If adverse criticism is to be directed at Mr. Brennan, it will probably come under the heading of omissions. Doubtless some readers acquainted with the field will feel that major figures, and particularly prose writers, have been omitted or slighted. Some regret must certainly be registered that the author terminated his study with the Generation of 1898, especially since his profound comprehension of the country's folklore would be so effective in understanding García Lorca and the other modern poets influenced by popular poetry. A few of his generalizations are debatable (such as his assertion that no writer of major importance appeared for almost two hundred years after the death of Calderón), most of all in the Postscript, where he recapitulates his definition of the characteristics of Spanish literature.

The author deserves a special debt of gratitude for expressing enthusiasm without becoming unduly exuberant and for ignoring the vague and trite terminology so abundant in literary manuals. His discussion of Góngora's poetry, to cite only one example, defines succinctly and in a thoroughly modern manner the aspect of the poet's work that is traditionally regarded as the least accessible. Above all, he has known how to strike the balance between his obligation to specialists in Spanish literature on the one hand and the general reader, or perhaps the specialist in related fields, on the other hand. The debt to the former requires the collection of data

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relating to biography, chronology, and sources—all the weighty and technical apparatus indispensable to the writing of literary history—in addition to the definition of ideas, taste, and values. Consideration for the interests of a larger audience than that of hispanists or hispanophiles, however, emphasizes the necessity of viewing literature broadly in order to present a panoramic view of cultural history. Between this Scylla and Charybdis, which has been the cause of more than one intellectual shipwreck, Mr. Brennan has sailed with masterly skill and eminent success.

JOHN M. FEIN

Duke University

What Is the Index? By Redmond A. Burke.
Bruce. \$2.75.

Many of our non-Catholic friends would be brought up short by the very first sentence in the Introduction: "Through the centuries the Catholic Church has maintained a deep respect for and a vital interest in books." This is the very thing, they would contend, that the Church has not showed respect for and interest in, and as proof they would adduce the Index of Forbidden Books.

However, it is one of the great merits of Fr. Burke's study of all the Church legislation touching books and their reading and distribution that he does keep in his mind and before the reader, with considerable success, the important fact not merely of what that legislation is, but what is the spirit behind it. The Church, as he neatly puts it, "has never looked on books as ends in themselves," but has "used books as a means of fulfilling what she regards as her teaching function."

This is a complete study—the fullest in English that your reviewer knows of, and it is a tool that ought to be handy for all (to say the least) who are professionally interested in books. It ought, as well, to be at the elbow of all who read extensively, whether they are professionals or not. It would obviate for them the necessity of

having to badger librarians and others with the perennial question "is such and such a book on the Index?"

Here are answered with authority such matters as what opens a book to the charge of being *ex professo* obscene, or anti-Catholic or anti-religious? are books that contain blasphemous phrases on the Index?—and many more. In addition, there are handy tables of the most familiar titles on the Index and kindred groupings. There is a discussion on the Great Books movement, especially timely right now because of the recent publication of the 54-volume set, *The Great Books of the Western World*.

An extensive bibliography covers not only works that are concerned with the Index, but mentions as well U. S. Catholic magazines and newspapers, book clubs and publishers who are devoting themselves to the promotion of Catholic literature. There is an index.

HAROLD C. GARDINER

François Mauriac ou la Psychologie du Pêcheur. By Augustin Leonard. Paris: Office général du livre.

This little book is not a decisive contribution to studies of Mauriac which are going to be more numerous now that the author's glory has been consecrated by the Nobel Prize. Yet it is always interesting and at times illuminating. Mr. Leonard has attempted to explore the psychology of the sinners in Mauriac, and still following Mauriac, to show that they are not as guilty as they at first appear. The critic has approached his problem from a theological rather than psychological point of view, and within the rather limited scope of his study he succeeds in assessing precisely the position of Mauriac in this much controverted subject. Mr. Leonard has found it necessary to restate the many powerful influences of the childhood and adolescence, notably the Jansenistic atmosphere in which the author was raised, and the sensitive connotations of his piety. Others had given

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these biographical data more completely and perhaps even more dramatically. The most arresting part of this study is the methodical, sound, authoritative treatment of the elements which enter into a typically Mauriacian concept of the fatality of sin. Mr. Leonard sees a combination of an erroneous conviction, akin if not identical with Jansenism, of man's predestination to sin, of the ever present action of the devil, of the pressure of heretical tendencies, the call of Cybele, and finally habit or psychological determinism. Yet another force struggles against these evil inclinations, divine grace, which operates, however, within human freedom. The much-needed book which would study how Mauriac reconciles two apparently opposed positions, determinism and human liberty, has not yet been written, but Mr. Leonard broaches that fascinating subject. Perhaps he has not seen that one should always distinguish in Mauriac between his instinctive tendencies, the necessary expression of his nature with which his own fictional characters emerge from his works, and his dogmatic pronouncements, required by his faith, intellectually sincere even though they often contradict the former. It is this formal belief which alone saves Mauriac's works from being heretical on the question of freedom. But there is also another instinct in Mauriac which is now in profound accord with his faith, that which unites him with the Church in the communion of saints, in his admiration for heroic virtues, for the mystery of vocation.

It is very regrettable that this otherwise engaging book is so marred by misprints which, at times, make its reading thoroughly disagreeable.

FERNAND VIAL

Fordham University

1000 Years of Irish Prose: The Literary Revival. By Vivian Mercier and David H. Greene. Devin-Adair. '\$6.00.

The Voice of the Irish. By Blanche Mary Kelly. Sheed and Ward. \$4.25.

The Stories of Frank O'Connor. Knopf. \$4.00.

Here, one might innocently suppose at first sight, is a happy combination: an anthology of "the most readable and the most significant in Irish prose writing from the beginning of the Literary Revival to the present day"; an historical and critical study of Irish literature which is mainly concerned with that Revival, its sources and significance; and the selected stories of the leader of the group of short-story writers who replaced the dramatists in the later phase of the movement.

But even a casual glance at the introduction to the first two books will warn the reader that this literary field has been, and to some extent still is, a battle-ground.

In her foreword, Dr. Kelly deplors the loose use of the word *Irish* in reference to the writers of this Renaissance. Having trapped the birds of Aengus in her net she examines their markings and comes to the melancholy conclusion: "the so-called Renaissance, far from bearing the age-old racial marks, is for the most part stamped with those of the alien force which destroyed Irish civilization and sought to destroy the race itself, and hence is not in any true sense either Irish or a real renaissance."

The chapter headings in *The Voice of the Irish* are indicative of the tone as well as the content: "The Gay and Gallant Gael," "The Downfall of the Gael," "The Call of the Eagle," etc. Most of them have an impeccable Gaelic ancestry. How vividly the very titles recall the patriotic histories of pre-1916 Ireland—books that were then so fresh, so courageous, so necessary in a country that was ashamed of the little it was allowed to know of its own past and that could not afford disinterested scholarship and needed not histories but handbooks of revolution. Even in those days of struggle, of course, there was the artist who refused to be drafted, to serve the immediate social purpose, not necessarily because he doubted the usefulness,

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still less the sincerity of the fighters, but because his way was different and he felt that even in such times one should press the claims of liberal knowledge and of art; he is the conscientious objector, tolerated but suspect. Newman and Yeats, it is worth recalling, faced somewhat similar Dublin audiences and had some enemies in common.

Mercier and Greene are far more catholic than Dr. Kelly in their tastes. In their introduction, they do not conceal the limitations of the Anglo-Irish or their writings; more important, they are aware of the independent Gaelic tradition which persisted even in the eighteenth century, when it became in Corkery's apt phrase "the hidden Ireland." So we get well-chosen extracts from the writings of those who, with more or less skill and fidelity, laid Gaelic literature open to the English-speaking world: Standish O'Grady, Lady Gregory and Douglas Hyde. Nor do they exclude the writers who gladly volunteered for revolution: two revolutionary statements of Pearse, extracts from the fighting journalism of A E (George Russell) and James Connolly and the Proclamation of the Irish Republic are given their rightful place in this literary anthology. The editors include *Cathleen Ni Houliban*, which brought Yeats closest to a political purpose; but they do not feel in any way obliged to exaggerate its merits simply because it was, to quote Dr. Kelly, "the one great nationalist drama of the Abbey group," and they also include *The Resurrection*, which he wrote thirty years later, a play whose appeal is far more limited.

In the section on Revolt we are also given the anti-heroic *Shadow of a Gunman* of O'Casey and *An Evening in Anglo-Ireland* by Elizabeth Bowen, which looks at a changing society from another vantage-point. Joyce is represented by the famous scene at the Christmas table in the *Portrait* as well as by the Sirens scene from *Ulysses*; this last is included in the section devoted to experimental writing. It is indica-

tive of the conservatism of technique in Irish fiction as well as of the slight influence of Joyce on subsequent Irish writers, at least in technical matters, that the only other examples in this section are *Resurrection*, the Yeats play mentioned above, and an extract from *At Swim-Two-Birds*, a book-within-a-book-within-a-book by Flann O'Brien, who has successfully crossed Joyce and Irish saga—with some assistance from James Stephens.

Frank O'Connor is represented by "First Confession" and "Bridal Night," both retained by the author in his collection under review; Synge by the controversial *In the Shadow of the Glen* as well as by extracts from his Aran Islands journal.

Again and again in reading this well-produced anthology one is struck by the revelation of contrast, between authors or between two works by the same author. Beside Corkery's typically sensitive and reverent "Rock-of-the-Mass" is an incident, no less typical, from George Moore's *Ave* where he tells of how deliciously he horrifies the devout Edward Martyn by refusing to go to Sunday Mass. The setting allows Moore to give himself away to the best advantage.

Thirty authors are represented and the samples are generous; "no snippets" was the compilers' first rule. As the only changes we can suggest would be additions (from Bryan MacMahon, Benedict Kiely and Francis MacManus) and not substitutions and as the book already runs to six hundred pages I feel it would be ungenerous to complain. The editors have chosen to publish their second volume first and to limit it to about seventy years, so the next volume will cover nine hundred years and cover them, one suspects, comfortably; for the flowering of Irish prose was late and luxuriant. The problem of dealing with Gaelic writing in the earlier centuries will demand careful study. To judge from this volume the compilers will strike a fair balance and maintain their literary standards.

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When we turn to Dr. Kelly's work we find ourselves in a bleaker atmosphere, and we recall the cynic quoted by Mercier and Greene who said that the Literary Revival was "nothing more than a group of writers who lived in the same town and hated each other cordially." We use the epithet *bleak* advisedly; for, while the author can be extravagantly generous in praise of mediocre writers who pass her tests of Irishness, she can be grossly unfair to even first-class writers beyond the pale. A case in point is Yeats. That Yeats had no deep understanding of mysticism is undoubtedly true and that his concept of the Celt was highly personal is obvious; but even these questions should be examined expertly and with sympathy (as Dr. Francis Shaw, S.J., Professor of Early Irish Literature in University College, Dublin, has examined his "Celtic" theories in *Studies*) if anything of value is to be said. Above all, one must take the measure of the poet's greatness. After reading this travesty on the poet ("... his poem on the Easter Rebellion, which he called a casual comedy" "... his *Last Poems* are the songs of a lecherous senility") one can only wonder why a native Government should have so honored the man or even gone to the expense of bringing his body home. Or again to say of Tom Moore that "he had not the slightest sense of the essential spirit of the race to which he belonged" is to be as unjustly harsh as to say of Pearse that "most literature in Ireland since his day bears his imprint" is to be unduly generous. Pearse's great influence came from his dedicated life and heroic death and in the light of them his writings took on added significance. Moore was not a hero and much of his work is third-rate English Romantic verse but at his best he justified his national reputation.

The factual material here assembled by Dr. Kelly will save the general reader considerable research; but in the case of a few standard and readily available works on Irish literature on which she draws

heavily it will be much more satisfactory to go to the source. In an effort to pack all Irish literary history into three hundred pages the significance of many authors and events is lost and often generally-accepted opinion will be uncritically accepted or dogmatically dismissed. It is difficult at times to see whether or not she is speaking on her own authority and it is very disconcerting to find that she accepts on occasion the views of the incompetent.

But the greatest defect in the book is its whole approach. There is room for a revaluation of Synge, for example, but he must inspire something more in the critic than instinctive revulsion or pity for the man in his poor state of health. If Ireland were exclusively populated by Celts it might be a much happier and more prosperous place, but as it happens it is not; and the Protestant Anglo-Irish have made a contribution to our life and culture that it would be ungrateful and dishonest to deny. And it is not necessary to the defense of either Catholicism or Ireland that we do deny it. Indeed there is no longer any need to defend Irish Catholicism at all. As Catholics we are not greatly concerned with racial purity.

One appreciates the exile's romantic view but the Irish have settled down to marriage with their ideal, to daily chores and love taken for granted. Some have become cynical by reaction. Frank O'Connor is cynical, when he remembers to be, in his own exuberant way. At times the result is amusing, at times tedious, at other times the story is warped by it. Of the five stories published for the first time in this collection "The Pretender" seems to us the most successful; only one, "My Da," can be called a failure. The best of O'Connor (for example, "The Long Road to Ummara," "Christmas Morning," or "The Majesty of the Law") belongs with the best short-story writing in English today. But one does wish that he would be truer to his art and resist the temptation to "mug" at his audience.

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From these books one can gain an insight into the richness and variety of Irish writing in the past fifty years and admire its independence.

PATRICK J. CASEY

Loyola University
Chicago, Illinois

Newman's Way: The Odyssey of John Henry Newman. By Sean O'Faolain. Devin-Adair. \$4.50.

If Cardinal Newman's cause is introduced, this may be among the first books the Devil's Advocate will want to read, not so much for the views expressed but because of the care with which it has been compiled from the sources.

No Devil's Advocate could have been more inquisitorial over every possible imperfection and, if there had been any skeleton in the Newman cupboard, it could hardly have escaped Mr. O'Faolain's vigilant eye. Let us then say at once that Newman's intellectual and moral greatness remains undiminished after this searching scrutiny. They are even enhanced, for a lively human touch has been added to a character hitherto sometimes obscured by too close an identification with the immense work which it was his historical destiny to achieve. That work is well known to all and it is merely summarized in this volume. But it is summarized with clarity and in the four chapters entitled "Emmaus and After," "Reason versus Rationalism," "The Schismatics" and "The Surrender" we read the oft told tale of Newman's conversion in a manner which is refreshingly original. We see him, beset by family anxieties, which would have made concentration impossible for the ordinary man, and yet achieving with almost superhuman daily effort the work in which he was engaged all his life, namely to convey to others his own convictions and not only to convey his thought to others but to clothe it in the most persuasive and musical language at his command. Step by step he had to convince himself, and when after rigorous mental questioning there was

no longer any doubt in his soul he had to prove his integrity by breaking with all which he most prized on earth. He was called upon to bear witness to the truth by an act of self-abnegation which would make it luminously clear to the whole world.

But, it may be said, there is nothing new in all this. True, the story of Newman's conversion is familiar enough, but like all great events it can still be told by a skillful narrator so as to add something new, and that is exactly what this book does. By presenting Newman to us against his family background we get a picture of him actually at work amidst all the distractions and irrelevancies which form the warp and woof of our lives. We also get an added appreciation of what the step he took must have meant to a man of his sensitivity. Indeed as he himself has told us it was like dying. But having once taken his decision he found as so many others have found that what he imagined he was losing was restored to him in a new and unfamiliar glory. All this is effectively brought out in Mr. O'Faolain's book, not so much by direct narrative as by implications the force of which will be clear only to those who read the book.

It is unfortunate at times that the author's fear of being eulogistic leads him to the other extreme. Also the tendency, from time to time, to interpret the motives and characters of Newman himself and others, who pass through these pages conspicuously. Miss Giberne, in psychoanalytical terms, is not very convincing. To this reviewer the tone of the book is sometimes unpleasant and unsympathetic. But at other times there are passages of poignantly delicate and penetrating writing which evoke the past as mysteriously as the echo of a footstep along a silent street at night.

Inordinate space surely has been given in the early part of the volume to the Newman ancestry. The object of the many pages devoted to that subject is apparently to show that Newman and his family were snobbish in attempting to exaggerate the importance of their antecedents. Apparently

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the author is so convinced that Newman suffered from a social inferiority complex that he attributes his shyness on becoming an Oriel fellow to his feeling of belonging to a lower class than that of the other fellows.

Another of the debatable views in the book is that Newman was indifferent to the social injustices of his age. It is a charge which one often hears. Personally he was one of the most generous and charitable of men with his own resources, but he does not appear to have been as alive as Manning to the social wrongs surrounding him. He was essentially conservative and had all the intense nationalist feeling characteristic of most nineteenth century Englishmen. Moreover he was absorbed in metaphysical, philosophical and theological questions. Abstract thought rather than practical politics was his sphere. However to charge him with indifference implies that he had given his mind to the social conditions and closed his eyes to them. It is high time that a study of Newman's thought as it affects social justice is undertaken to dispel if possible the current view regarding his attitude towards that question.

Parts of this book might with advantage have been omitted or modified, but as a measure of its success it may be said that it would not be easy for one who has read it to think in the future of Newman or of many of the persons who pass through its pages, like Hurrell Froude or the Cardinal's brothers Frank and Charles for instance, without associating them with their characters as portrayed here. Many aspects, too, of the Victorian world in which much of Newman's life was spent are so vividly drawn that they remain in the mind as memorable pictures of that romantic age—all the more valuable as it is now vanishing so quickly from view.

ROBERT WILBERFORCE

Rouault. By Jacques Maritain. 25 plates. Abrams. \$1.50.

It was at the home of Léon Bloy that

Jacques Maritain first met Georges Rouault so many years ago. The new century had only just begun, and the young artist had already initiated that style and approach so much his own that alienated Bloy and bewildered those who knew his work at the Academy under Gustave Moreau. Unknown and unrecognized in an art-world just captured by the Impressionists, misunderstood even by his closest friends, Rouault would stand pale and silent for hours listening to the discussions that raged about him. He rarely had anything to say, knowing that he was right yet dreading the pain that Bloy's uncomprehending criticism would bring him. He was accused of being "... exclusively attracted by the ugly. You have a vertigo of the hideous." This from the author of *La Femme Pauvre* and *Désespéré*, the very works which inspired in Rouault that burning spirit which has made him the most profound artist of our time.

Since that first meeting, the Maritains have become close friends of Rouault and he was an almost weekly guest at their home in Paris. Surely few people know and understand him and the art which is his life as well as Jacques Maritain. He has written frequently about the artist. Indeed *Art and Scholasticism* was inspired by his observations of Rouault in his spirit, temperament, and approach to art. Maritain has said in his little essay on Rouault in *Art and Poetry* that "A philosopher could study in him the virtue of art as in the pure state, with all its exigencies, its mysteries, its fierce self-restraint." But seldom has Maritain written so eloquently as in the fine text of this little book. There are only twelve pages of text, yet Maritain habitually writes well and persuasively and this work is certainly no exception.

At the age of eighty-one Rouault is rather universally acknowledged today as the greatest religious painter of the modern era, probably the most profound and significant the world has seen since El Greco. There is little doubt that he will be ranked with the truly authentic masters of all ages.

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And yet he is unique and alone in the so-called contemporary movement that we have witnessed since Cezanne and Daumier. Unlike Picasso and the "school of Paris," he is not an experimenter. He has issued no manifestos and has founded or followed no "isms." Although in the beginning he exhibited with the Fauves, he did not ally himself with them. His is a compelling art, brooding, challenging, threatening, disturbing—the very antithesis of that of Matisse. He is not given to theorizing, and if one were to ask him to "explain" his art, he would probably mutter that refrain which is forever on his lips "form, color, harmony—that is art." But this is, in him, more a statement of fact than a clarification, for it is his ability to unite these three into a perfect whole which constitutes the fiery gift that is the difference between an artist and a dauber.

But it is impossible fully to understand the art of Georges Rouault without understanding the faith which is at its roots and origin. This artist is above all else a Christian and a Catholic. Deeply religious personally, almost a mystic in the same sense that John of God and Teresa were mystics, his faith permeates all of his work. There is nothing, not even the still-lives and the landscapes, that does not partake of the mystery of Incarnation and Redemption about which his art revolves. He has written, "A Christian, I believe only in these threatening times in Jesus on the cross." From the earliest days Rouault has been haunted by the vision of the Man of Sorrows. No other artist, I think, has ever equalled or surpassed him in revealing the awesomeness of Divine suffering.

But in the titanic paroxysm of sin and redemption all of humanity and nature must share. Hence the tender, piteous clowns, the fleshly prostitutes—hideous symbols not merely of the lusts of the body, but of the spirit as well, a bitter indictment of those who will prostitute their souls—by far the greater sin. His sense of social justice cried out against the venal judges

untempered by mercy or love, the enveloping slums of the industrial suburbs that surround Paris choking the very life of the wretched people who return in despair each night to their beds. In a poem (he has composed many), Rouault has written,

The road mounts to the horizon
Bordered by lean trees

And a man bent over walks that road to his lodging

Perspiring and sad

And will do all over again each tomorrow
What he has done the day before.

As a superb colorist Rouault has no competitor in contemporary art. The burning reds, smouldering like embers, intense blues and rich, heavy blacks all in thick impasto give a splendor to his canvases that defies description. Yet not since Daumier has there been such a master in the art of gravure. The great series of fifty-eight huge etchings, "Miserere et Guerre," which he executed over a period of ten years for Ambroise Vollard, are justly famous. They are among the most moving and eloquent documents in all of art. The renowned Curator of Prints of the Chicago Art Institute, Mr. Carl Schniewind, has been unable to explain the prodigious technique that produced them, but all that the artist will say of them is that ". . . they give me a copper plate and I dig into it."

In recent years Rouault's palette has brightened. His art is tempered and it is the gentle Christ that emerges, surrounded by His disciples. The Nativity, the Flight in Egypt. Gayer clowns and brilliant landscapes. He has said, "I spent my life painting twilights. I ought to have the right now to paint the dawn." World-wide recognition has come to him and on his eightieth birthday, at the Palais du Chaillot in a special ceremony, the rank of Commander of the Legion of Honor was conferred upon him by the President of France.

This little book, then, is a timely one. While one may find some fault with the accuracy of the color reproductions, and

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there are ten of them, it is unfair to expect too much from a work so modestly priced. Moreover the text is such a fine one that it alone is more than worth the small cost. I hope that this publication will serve to bring more and more people to an awareness and an appreciation of the work of the greatest religious artist of our day.

RICHARD JAMES DOUAIRE

The Film of Murder in the Cathedral. By T. S. Eliot and George Hoellering. Harcourt, Brace. \$6.00.

Complete Poems and Plays. By T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace. \$6.00.

Christopher Fry Album. By Derek Stanford. British Book Centre. \$3.50.

In very different ways both T. S. Eliot with *Murder in the Cathedral* and Christopher Fry with *A Sleep of Prisoners* have attempted to reintroduce an old form, poetic religious drama. Further, they have brought drama once more close to its historical source: Eliot's study of Thomas à Becket was originally written to be acted in the Chapter House at Canterbury; Fry's *A Sleep of Prisoners* was first produced in St. Mary's, Oxford, a church closely linked with Newman's early sermons.

Recently published is the complete scenario and film script of Eliot's play which has been made into a movie and has had its premiere in London and New York but has not as yet toured the country. Certain cuts, alterations, and even additional new scenes, especially written by Eliot for the recent version, are included in this pioneering effort to transfer poetic drama to the screen. Particularly interesting is a Preface in which Eliot discusses the changes necessitated by the difference between the two dramatic forms.

The book, handsomely designed, with half a dozen plates in color, forty-eight monochrome illustrations from the film, and nearly seventy line drawings, along with sketches of sets, costumes, and properties, is so tastefully executed that it should rank as a collector's item.

The Complete Poems and Plays of Eliot contains all of his poetry and drama except the new scenes for *Murder in the Cathedral*, including even *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*. For this first collection of Eliot's poetry as well as plays the type has been entirely reset in attractive new format and printed in laid paper. Even in these days of increased prices, six separate volumes have been gathered to sell for six dollars.

And a tribute to Fry has been published in the form of a picture album collected by Derek Stanford who has added a running commentary which, like his *Christopher Fry: An Appreciation*, is characterized by enthusiasm rather than critical discrimination. In spite of Sir Laurence Olivier's *bon mot*, "As Shy as Fry," Stanford has brought together sixty handsome half tones of the playwright's life and triumphs, including pictures of the productions of his plays not only in London but in such places as Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Berlin, closing with *A Sleep of Prisoners* which recently toured churches in this country.

The most recent rumor is that Fry is at work on a new tragedy based on the life of Henry II, the king who is Thomas' opponent in *Murder in the Cathedral* and to whom Eliot gives greater prominence in the film version than in the earlier play. When it appears, a really critical comparison of the two poet-dramatists will be possible.

JOHN PICK

Catholic Authors: Contemporary Biographical Sketches. Vol. II. Ed. by Matthew Hoehn. Newark, N. J. St. Mary's Abbey. \$6.50.

Scholars, editors, and librarians will welcome the completion of Matthew Hoehn's much-needed encyclopaedic collection of biographical sketches of Catholic authors. They will appreciate the immense labor that went into such a compilation, for which the sources are so widely scattered and for which accuracy is of such great importance. The 633 pages of the present volume add the sketches of 374 authors, bringing up the

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total in the two volumes to nearly 1000.

Included are the most important Catholic authors who have written books (whether these books deal directly with Catholic subjects and material or not), and who are either living or have died since 1930. Here are not merely writers in the field of belles lettres, but philosophers, theologians, historians, etc., though they must have written at least one volume to qualify. In the case of those writing in foreign languages, the editor has confined himself to authors who have had at least one book translated into English.

Almost every entry includes a picture, followed by a biographical sketch and a checklist of the writer's most important books. There is not a great deal of uniformity in the style and tone, which varies from strict biographical factuality to informality. While this unevenness has obvious disadvantages, it also makes for variety and readability when one browses through the book as a whole.

There are several omissions, though these are adequately explained in the Preface. Occasionally the critical reader will find a disproportion in the length of the entries in cases where an important author receives less space than that devoted to a relatively minor writer. Sometimes the comments are lacking in critical standards—but it is, of course, unfair to expect from such a work that it be a critical evaluation of the Catholic revival.

That is a task for future scholars. In their work they will find these two volumes indispensable guides and tools, and they will always be grateful to Matthew Hoehn for laying the foundation upon which monuments of critical analysis and evaluation may be built.

JOHN PICK

Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition: A Study in the Relation of Christianity to Culture. By Amos N. Wilder. Scribner's. \$3.00.

Rehearsals of Discomposure. Alienation in Modern Literature: Kafka, Silone, D. H.

Lawrence, Eliot. By Nathan A. Scott, Jr. King's Crown Press. \$3.00.

Wilder's book will irritate—indeed it has already annoyed—the Catholic reader, and yet it is challenging and thought-provoking, and, if read with discrimination, it can be both a humbling and salutary experience. Certainly its author, who also wrote *The Spiritual Aspects of the New Poetry* (1940) and is a man of wide reading, attempts a detached examination which is offered in good faith. Often we are too prompt to listen with suspicion to whatever is good in such a book.

Briefly, Wilder's thesis is that contemporary secular literature has moved toward theological and Christian themes at a time when large elements of society have been alienated from religious institutions. Modern poetry especially reflects this trend and many of the major poetic works today are undeniably theological in character.

It is a commonplace of contemporary criticism that literature of any universality employs a widely accepted body of symbol, rich in imaginative association and thus capable of giving to a work coherence, depth and resonance—and further, the effectiveness of such symbolism for art and literature requires that to be accepted as living and potent.

The Christian heritage, he contends, makes itself felt in modern poetry but where it is powerful it can find adequate expression only by liberating itself in two senses: first, in transcending the stereotypes of traditional religious sensibility and symbol; and second, by breaking with the special "poetic" and rhetoric which has been the familiar medium of religious poetry.

It would seem that this is what Eliot and Auden—and Hopkins, Lowell, and Merton—have done, and Catholic critics must ask themselves whether (in some sense, with whatever qualifications) this is not at least one of the reasons why so much Catholic poetry of today fails to make an impact on the contemporary mind.

A similar idea occurs in Nathan Scott's

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Rehearsals of Discomposure. Those modern writers, he holds, who have failed to achieve a "transcension" (to use his Kirkegaardian schematization) from the esthetic to the ethical and finally to the metaphysical or the religious are those who no longer seem to have anything to say to us. He singles out for special analysis four leading moderns, Kafka, Silone, D. H. Lawrence, and Eliot as spiritual historians of our time, all haunted by the alienation of the finite from the infinite. The ultimate vision of Kafka and Lawrence he finds incomplete, that of Silone and Eliot more satisfying precisely because the latter are supported by an affiliation with the discipline of the dogmas of Christian faith. Christianity hence, he concludes, is deeply relevant to the modern problems of estrangement and alienation that form so large a part of contemporary literature, problems which the literature of today must reflect if it is to have a relevance for us.

It is therefore important that the Christian writer today in order to touch modern man must, like Lowell, Mauriac, and Greene, not write in isolation from contemporary movements but must be aware of modern man's dilemma, must have some sense of the difficulty of "holding orthodox doctrines in a heterodox world."

Further, "their imagery, though forged in the interior of Christian faith [must be] welded together with the more intimately known images of modern experience." It is particularly in Eliot that Scott finds the most appealing solution, for in him the traditional vocabulary of Christianity is rarely resorted to because he is deeply aware of the process of banalization that has overtaken the traditional language of religious poetry and the consequent necessity of discovering a new language through which the transcendent meaning of reality may appear today as it once did in ages past.

It is at this point that one can see Scott presenting the religious poet of today with much the same challenge put forward by Wilder—and surely it is a challenge worth trying to meet.

JOHN PICK

The Concept of Love in the French Catholic Literary Revival. By Sister Francis Ellen Riordan. The Catholic University of America Press.

This doctoral dissertation is the literary history of a motif: the problem of love as it is found in modern Catholic writers of France. The problem is unfolded and laid over the pattern of love described in the *Divine Comedy* where "Dante's love was purified and changed from love to *caritas* because Beatrice gave him the taste for sacrifice, the *sine qua non* of selfless love." In this love the author finds three graduations which she treats in three chapters: "Mystery of Inquietude," "Mystery of Suffering" and "Mystery of Charity." The chapter titles happily raise love from a problem (something to be solved) to a mystery (suggesting the insoluble). The author tells us it will not be within her province to treat of the problem of love from a theological or philosophical point of view as M. C. D'Arcy, Rousselot, Nygren, and de Rougement have done.

After a preliminary chapter in which she examines the trends in such nineteenth-century writers as Barbey d'Aurevilly, Bourget, and Huysmans, the author begins her study of the contemporary writers who treat of the problems confronting the individual and of those confronting married partners. Desire for happiness, unrest, hate, separateness, and above all, a search for something to transcend human love, are found in both Catholic and non-Catholic writers, which shows the problem to be a human one, and not merely a Catholic one. The Catholic writers here are Henry Daniel-Rops, Marcel Arland, Julien Green, Gabriel Marcel, François Mauriac, and Emile Baumann. The summation of the problem is presented in André Gide's novel *La Porte Etroite* which "contains all the phases of inquietude . . . from apprehensiveness to a sense of the evanescence of human love, and the most important, the desire for renunciation" (italics are mine). This novel breathes a puritanical austerity—Alissa notes

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in her diary she once thought that two lovers could go through life like two pilgrims leaning on one another. But no! the road that the Lord teaches is a narrow road, so narrow that on it two can not walk abreast. She "flees" without knowing exactly why and dies "seule."

The next part treats of suffering, quietly accepted like Maria Chapdelaine's or wallowed in by Marchenoir in all the confusion of human and divine love Bloy can muster up, perceived mystically by the poet Marie Noël, resolved by *Le Pénitent de Furnes* (Henri Davignon) in a dubious reversibility of merits and finally in "renouncement." It is in *Le Baiser au Lépreux* of Mauriac that the author finds a situation "in which accepted mental and physical suffering effects the consummation of marriage on the level of charity." Even after Jean's death, remarriage is for Noémi unthinkable—"toute route lui était fermée, hors le renoncement." The author concludes: "The gift of herself in true charity, signified by the kiss she bestowed on the sick and ugly Jean, have won for Noémi the grace to embrace this path of renouncement." In Bernanos' *Sous le Soleil de Satan* we are shown even moments of "pure love," a love strong enough to challenge and defeat the forces of Hell. It is a love won by suffering.

In the third part, "The Mystery of Charity," the vague awareness of the call of the kingdom of God is seen first in the work of an author only partly related to the *Renouveau Catholique*. *Le Grand Meaulnes* by Henri-Alain Fournier holds "hints of the exigencies and competition of Divine Love . . . search for the Absolute and a deep conviction of the irrevocable quality of purity." Esther, the Jewess of *La Chercheuse d'Amour* by Louis Artus, and Clothilde (*La Femme Pauvre* by Bloy) after experiencing human love, come to realize "that a total gift of self to God is required of them." To still other characters, nearness to death gives a new perspective on human love. Here it is Gabriel Marcel who says the final word in his play *Le Mort de*

Demain, in which a soldier who comes home on furlough finds that his wife's love for him has "progressed" to a level where she would desire that they be "seulement des âmes." This sublimation has been effected in her by the thought of her husband's closeness to death and to eternal life. The tensions which result are the subject of this play. I shall speak of them later. Sister Francis Ellen concludes: "Certainly the placing of human love at the very threshold of eternity brings, for Jeanne, a spiritual insight into the mystery of *chastity*" (italics are mine). In two other works a special grace comes to characters showing them the exigencies of divine love. *Le Pauvre sous l'Escalier* (the legend of St. Alexis) by Henri Ghéon is the extreme case. In the poetry of Gustave Thibon human love, calm and strong, is a "route" and not a "halte heureuse" and the lovers cross the frontier into divine love. The death of one of them becomes the matter of "sacrificial renouncement." The competition between human and divine love is shown in the works of Paul Claudel whose dramas alone show forth all the gradations of inquietude, purifying suffering and renouncement we have been studying. His lyric *Cantate à Trois Voix* is Dantesque. It marks the *attente* for the coming of grace, the disappearance of the beloved who has fulfilled her rôle in leading man to God, and finally the presence of Light. The competition is completely resolved in *La Joie* by Bernanos.

In her conclusion the author ranks these writers according to the degree of clarity with which they envisage the problem—rather the mystery—of love and according to the psychological and mystical depths out of which their works take their rise.

Four questions arise in my mind regarding this dissertation which has the signal merit of doing what the author set out to do. I venture to ask them as a reviewer somewhat diffident in the presence of a problem at once so vast and so deep. First, is the Dante-Beatrice pattern a valid one on which to lay this vast body of literature? Mani-

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festly certain works like *La Porte Etroite* and the whole of Gustave Thibon and Claudel can be fitted to it while other works and authors seem to lie there somewhat askew or held too forcibly on the pattern. Secondly, I should like to ask why it is in Catholic literature that the Dante-Beatrice pattern is not countered by a pattern wherein man with his fuller priesthood leads **woman to the throne** of God. This last question is of course a purely rhetorical one. Thirdly, because I feel very uncomfortable in regard to certain uses of the idea and of the word "renouncement," I should like to ask for a precise definition of "renouncement," which runs through the work like a theme. In general, if my interpretation is correct, the author means renouncement of the union of marriage. It would seem necessary to distinguish among three kinds of renouncement: that which is a fundamental factor in virginity; that which is **implied in the very self-donation** and servitude of human love and which includes, according to Jean Guitton, "mutual service, condescension, temporary absence, support, paternity, maternity, widowhood;" and finally that renouncement of forbidden pleasure which was commanded by God amid lightnings and engraved on a tablet of stone for preservation. Similarly the expressions "radical purity" and "radical renouncement" to be achieved by married partners (pp. 139 and 190) make me uneasy. The use of "chastity" when one should expect "continence" may be only faulty expression but the vague uneasiness that such confusion causes in me is in no way allayed by the author's treatment of the play of Gabriel Marcel where she praises Jeanne's chastity. (This is the wife whose love for her husband became so spiritualized that she refused herself to him when he was home on furlough.) I am in no way quarrelling with the psychological and moral problem Gabriel Marcel is presenting. It could be a very real one. But the fact still remains that Jeanne's refusal is an act of injustice to her husband, and debts to per-

sons are not dissolved in any abnormal sublimation such as Jeanne's seems to me to be. I think less praise might also be given to the characters in Ghéon's play *Le Pauvre sous l'Escalier*. For it involves a mystique that is rare and buried in legend. It is even rumored that in the contemplated revision of the Roman breviary there will be a curtailment of hagiographical detail on this subject. Furthermore, it is very difficult to distinguish between a true sublimation of human love and its opposite: a descent from divine love into the darker areas of human love. It would, I think, be the better part of wisdom to refrain from judgment, if not in the case of St. Alexis, at least in such dubious cases as *Le Pénitent de Furnes*. In short I should like to be assured that in the appraisal of human love in the works of these French writers there has crept no trace of angelism nor Manicheism, which would be the case if divine love were detached from all nuptial foundations. A statement of the wholeness of human love, physical and spiritual, its rightness, the possibility of carnal love's being "assumed" (Jean Guitton) into the realm of the spirit without its being abolished or "renounced," and the possibility in turn of an integral human love's being "assumed" by Divine Love—such a statement is needed to show how far short even these great intuitive artists (Gustave Thibon excepted) come from incarnating the fullness and oneness of conjugal love in the Judeo-Christian tradition, a tradition that takes account of the realism of the *Canticle of Canticles*, the sacramentality of Pauline teaching, the flesh in which St. John saw the Word make His abode, the dignity and freedom of the human person. Christian conjugal love moreover, while remaining "a flame of Jahveh" as the *Canticle* suggests, must come to terms with duty and all the virtues.

Lastly, I should like to ask if the method the author follows does not in at least one instance do violence to the general import of a single writer's work. Her method

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allows for a great amount of subjectivity in the choice of works studied. For obviously not all works of any author could be studied in so comprehensive a work. *Le Baiser au Lépreux*, while it supports her thesis better, is not characteristic of Mauriac as a whole, nor of his treatment of love. *Le Noeud de Vipères*, even the extreme *Souffrances d'un Chrétien* in which he expresses an attitude only slightly modified in subsequent artistic works, would give a far truer impression of Mauriac. The author of this dissertation does not of course pass over *le trouble* and the hate and the separateness in Mauriac's

emphasis given it the sublimation of love characteristic *ménage* but on account of the in the early novel has a prominence that is undue, if we regard the work of Mauriac as a whole.

We are grateful to Sister Francis Ellen for having accomplished a task perhaps too big for this reviewer to review. We are even grateful for pages of *lecture expliquée* on Bernanos and *La Cantate à Trois Voix* of Claudel, although they occasion a certain unevenness and lack of proportion in her work.

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Fordham University will conduct its second session of the French Institute for Sisters during the summer of 1953. Father Pierre du Bourguet, S.J., Professor at the Institut Catholique of Paris, and Assistant Curator of the Museum of the Louvre, will be the visiting professor. A program of lectures by prominent outside speakers and field trips has been arranged. For all information, please write to Prof. Fernand Vial, director of the French Institute.

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